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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

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The Book Trade

THE book trade has not escaped the general dulness which for six months and more has hung over American business, but whether book sales have declined in correspondence with the decrease in the movement of general commodities and for the same reasons is not so certain. It has frequently been said, although perhaps never proved, that when the business cycle drops, book sales and education of the young point upward, or, at least, do not decline.

Books regarded as commodities belong to a class that must be called queer. New books are especially so, for, unlike any other comparable article, ninety percent of them, at least, have a shorter life than an orange or an apple, and they must be replaced not by more of the same kind, but by a new product that requires a fresh effort to create and distribute. And an old new book—especially if it is fiction—loses value at a rate unequalled among dry goods (especially if it *is* dry). On October first it may be worth $2.50, on January first, $1.00, by the next October, a few cents.

New books, selling justifiably at present costs, from $2.00 to $5.00, must also compete with older books that have shown themselves durable, and these, which, by and large, are admittedly better on the average, except in novelty or timeliness, can be sold readily at $1.00 or less. And yet unless new books are created and distributed, the corpus of the old tends always to go stale, to become that dreadful thing, a body of "classics" self-contained and reproductive only of imitations of itself. If anyone doubts the economic pressure of this rivalry, with its consequent dangers, let him study the somewhat analogous circumstances in the United States of the earlier nineteenth century, when pirated English novels sold cheaply because stolen from their authors, and the native novelist was driven to ephemeral magazine writing in order to keep alive. Against this hard fact Hawthorne struggled and upon it Poe ground out his life.

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And yet this year, certainly, there is a more cogent reason for dulness in the book trade. It is not the only cause, but it glares like a bill board in a country meadow before the eyes of those who love and handle books. There have been too many mediocre books published. There have been too many books printed that were publishable but not worth publishing. There were too many second-hand biographies, third-hand detective stories, and novels too feeble to sit up alone; too many scrap books on child-welfare, psychology, general history, marriage, the personality of Christ, international relations, pioneer life, Italy, and Russia. There were too, too many novels that vaguely repeated the pattern of last year's successful book. Too many worthy but undistinguished volumes translated from the German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, and French.

Mediocre books are always lurking inchoate in the brains of authors, adaptors, and translators, waiting for a vital urge. And this year birth control among the publishers has definitely broken down, and the poor misbegotten weaklings crowd the reviewers' shelves and the bookshop tables.

It may be that the sudden loosening of birth-strings is due to the flocks of new publishers, for a new publisher must build a list, and in the hope of a "find," or in need of a biography or a detective story, or tempted by a well-known name, may be midwife to an unnecessary accouchement.

Unquestionably, too, the dearth of outstanding books either in America or England has led to a dangerous relaxation. The trade was set to sell another "Bridge of San Luis Rey," or "Babbitt," or "Story of Philosophy"—with blare and shout of advertisements, ballyhoo in the news columns, and high pressure salesmanship—and when such books did not come the fever spent itself upon lesser works, and, like disease in a feeble body, shot up the temperature to an unhealthy tension. There has been more exaggeration in the advertisements of books this year than ever before in the history of bookselling—presumably because the books were harder to sell.

It is the familiar tale of overproduction—but the remedies are by no means simple. Books are not shoes, or soup. We shall get better books shortly, but not by asking for them. There is no cure for *that* lack but time. What can be done is to shorten immediately the publishers' lists. But this requires

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For Anice

By LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

LAUGHTER, soft speech, round, salty tears,
Emperors' houses, sails at sea,
Each holds you, and your spent young years,
As hives the honey of the bee.

Even the shops in blurred old towns,
Bring you from intolerable space,
Double your rareness with their gowns
Like those you wore in a lost place.

Fog-blue one, and one the gold
Of half-blown wall-flowers in the spring;
Never a girl was a thing so cold;
Never so misty, flaming a thing.

The elder-bush in broad, green lot,
So white, so frail, and smelling there
Like spice set boiling in a pot,
Petals you in the village air.

Delicately about I go
Since you have made the dust your bed:
When I am asked of large or low,
What can I say but that you are dead?

This Week

"Bystander."
Reviewed by ALEXANDER KAUN.
"Poor Nigger."
Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT.
"The Scarab Murder Case."
Reviewed by EUGENE REYNAL.
"The Week-End Book."
Reviewed by HENRY WALCOTT BOYNTON.
"Common Stocks and the Average Man."
Reviewed by MYRON M. STRAIN.
"Shelley's Lost Letters to Harriet."
Reviewed by H. W. GARROD.
Babbitt and the Humanist Debate.
By MARY M. COLUM.
"The Road to Wildcat."
Reviewed by NEWELL NILES PUCKETT.
John Mistletoe.
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Next Week, or Later

The Completed Biography of Manuel.
By ELLEN GLASGOW.

If Not, Then Not

By ALBERT J. NOCK

I HAVE been asked to write something about the differences that I notice between European civilization and ours. I notice a good many, some creditable to Europe, and some to America. In a magazine of this character, however, it seems appropriate to speak only of those which bear upon literature, and I accordingly mention the two which seem to me to be the most important.

Literature in this country seems to me to be judged always by what the late Walter Weyl admirably called the specific gravity of its content, and not at all by the quality of workmanship displayed upon it. I am referring mainly to popular judgment, though professional judgment usually appears to have been informed in the same way. I have read a number of books in vogue, and heard them praised by people who might be thought to know a good thing when they saw it, and have been disappointed to find them written in a careless, undistinguished way, slipshod and bad enough to put off any reader, I thought, who had a decent regard for the ordinary niceties of literary practice. I have also read a good many magazine articles which were well informed but quite characterless; they might all have been written by the same hand, and that hand (in a literary, as distinguished from a journalistic sense) unpractised and incompetent. The fact that such books and articles are acceptable, as evidently they are, bore out my observation that American readers are much more indifferent to literary craftsmanship than they should be, as those foreign readers are.

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This is hard on the writer, as compared, for example, with the painter or musician. Many of us can remember how a singer like Gilibert or Edmond Clément would take a very commonplace song and make it seem about ten times better than it was. Even the "Star-spangled Banner" sounded almost like good music when Dr. Karl Muck finally consented to lead the old Boston Orchestra through it. Jan ver Meer of Delft painted a picture which, as one sees it now in the Mauritshuis at the Hague, shows—as I am no judge—a specific gravity of content low enough for anybody. It is the portrait of a young girl, perhaps as homely as any in Holland at the moment, evidently tuberculous or anæmic, and afflicted with adenoid growths. Critics say that her nose and lips show the finest workmanship ever bestowed on any nose and lips in the whole history of painting. Ver Meer gets the benefit of that distinction from all the thousands of Americans who visit the Mauritshuis every year. They may be sorry that he did not have a handsomer subject, but their regret does not interfere with their appreciation of his craftsmanship. An American artist may paint a Bowery street scene or the corner of a cow-barn, and get all the credit that his workmanship deserves. An American writer is judged in the main by a different standard; his art counts for little in determining the general appreciation of his work.

For example, a small and unpretentious book came to my hand the other day, which I read with deeper interest than any in years. It was written a few years ago by Mr. Alleyne Ireland, and lately republished. Its subject was only moderately interesting to me; it was an account of the author's experience as a member of the secretarial staff of a blind American millionaire. But the literary skill displayed throughout it, its composition, management of light and shade, delicacy of balance between sympathy and objectivity, the impeccable excellence of its narrative style—all this fascinated me to the point of finishing the book at one reading. Yet when I met Mr.

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Ireland later and spoke to him of my admiration for his work, he told me that the book was utterly disregarded and that hardly any one had ever read it. I doubt that this could happen among the "reading classes" in Belgium, Holland, or France, the countries whose reading habits I am best acquainted with.

In thinking of this disposition on the part of our reading public, I have sometimes wondered whether, if certain of our American classics—for instance, "Two Years Before the Mast"—were brought out as new books to-day, they could find any readers. The substance of Mr. Dana's book would probably not interest many now, when sea-going is an affair of steam, giant liners, and luxuriousness. It never interested me at all, for I have a rooted indisposition to any mode or form of travel, and a sea-voyage has always been something to be got over as best one might. But Mr. Dana's management of his subject, his style and manner—in a word, his artistic competence—kept my interest and admiration unabated to the end of the book. He might have written on any subject in the world, even one as unpromising as ver Meer's, and if he had written *that way*, the effect on me would have been the same.

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When one undertakes to account for the prevalence of this single standard of judgment in America, the reasons are not far to seek. In the eighteenth century Bishop Butler, the redoubtable author of the "Analogy," remarked as one of the bad effects of an over-abundance of printed matter, that people became more adept at "passing things through their minds than at thinking about them." Thus it was, he said, that hardly any of their time was more idly spent than the time spent in reading. Whatever may have been true of England in Bishop Butler's day, this is certainly true of America now. It is surprising to see how little reading is done here for any other purpose than that of pastime; how little literature is current—that is to say, bought deliberately and perused—except that which is frankly a "literature of escape," or may be used as such. Hence literature at large is measured in this way; this comes to be regarded as literature's primary general function. When one picks up Mr. Edgar Wallace's latest to kill the tedium of a railway journey, one takes it solely for content. When one habitually picks up books to kill tedium, one soon thinks that this is what all books are for, and that they are to be judged solely by content.

Nowhere is this use of literature so general as in the United States; one may say it is almost national. Nor is there anywhere anything like our production of a type of literature devised to meet this demand. Nor is it only books more or less of the "yellowback" order, or the tired-business-man's periodicals that are used in this way. The "outline" books, for example. Those which sweeten up, popularize, and dose out homeopathetic attenuations of history, natural science, biography, and so on, fulfil precisely the same function, as may be known from observations of those who read them; and so do many others of a more special character. It is observable, too, that the over-valuation of sheer literacy, which is characteristic of America, is a considerable factor in promoting this use of literature. Our educational system enables a great many people to read who have not the force of mind to form for themselves an intelligent purpose to guide their reading, or the force of character to accept one that their educators might suggest. Hence their employment of literature rarely rises above the level of "escape." I think it is not generally known that this class of readers is very large, and that they are found in strata of society where their presence in any great number might not naturally, perhaps, be suspected. The proportion of them is probably as high in our colleges and universities, for instance, as it is elsewhere.

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The second difference that I notice in the attitude of our civilization, compared with that of such parts of Europe as I am acquainted with, is that literature is regarded much more as merchandise. European publishers have to make a living, of course, so they must, and do, consider books as merchandise, and employ mercantile methods in disposing of them. But their methods seem more intelligently adapted to the nature of their goods; they do not use the same methods that they would think appropriate if they were selling soap or cigarettes. The American publishers apparently find it necessary to use methods that seem quite the same. In advertising, for instance, their methods are precisely those of the *parfumeur*. We have all noticed that there is a group or class of dealers in superlatives who always willingly make themselves quotable in favor of a book, just as there is a group of celebrities at Hollywood who are always glad to put in a good word for somebody's face-powder; and it is on the strength of recommendations like these that literature is regularly presented to the market.

I say this without a thought of blame to the American publisher. He can point to the very high organization of the retail trade in Europe, as against its utterly disorganized and chaotic state in America, and say with indubitable truth and certainty that if the European publisher had to confront such conditions in retail distribution, he, too, would employ such methods as they forced upon him. The American publisher can point, too, to the indubitable fact that the majority of his own potential market is but a bare degree above illiteracy, looking for but one general kind of benefit from reading, while the European publisher's is not. Hence this large section of the American market accepts literature only on the same terms of presentation to which it has become accustomed in the presentation of the general run of luxury-products. The European publisher is not dealing in a luxury product, and is therefore at liberty to present his product in an appropriate way.

So there is no blame attaching to our publishers, if I were disposed to deal in blame, which I am not, being in the far better business of dealing with the plain exposition of certain differences in the quality of live civilizations. The state of things here is hard on any but the strictly go-getting type of either publisher or writer. I imagine that this is the only country in the world where the commercial destiny of a book is controlled by salesmen; it may be so in England—I do not know. In America, however, a book is accepted and published; the editorial department may be ever so interested in it and enthusiastic about it; but the person who decides whether or not that book shall be featured and "pushed," and how far it shall be pushed, is not the editor but the sales manager! I know of two publishing houses in New York, relatively small—there may be others—which afford a kind of halfway exception to this rule; but this is the rule.

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Sales managers are presumably like everybody else, in coming under the magnificent generalization laid down by Henry George, that "man tends naturally to gratify his needs and desires with the least possible exertion." Their tendency would be to force all kinds of books under the same general selling policy. Rather than cudgel their brains over a special selling policy for a book which is exceedingly good, but to which the general policy is more or less inapplicable, they would be satisfied to let it sell under the general policy to the point of "paying itself out," and then drop it. This is one aspect of what I mean by the exclusive view of literature as merchandise. The sales manager is not to be blamed; nevertheless, the result is a disappointment to the publisher, who more often than not would like to sell a good book if he could. With his whole mechanism of distribution geared to a large output of indifferent books, however, he would find it too costly and troublesome to throw it out of gear for two or three good ones. It is a disappointment to the author, also. A publisher showed me a magnificent book the other day, representing years of work, that he said had barely sold enough to clear itself. There was no reason for this except the one I have just given! I told him by way of gentle humor that he had a rotten sales department, and he replied gloomily that he didn't doubt it. Yet if I wrote a lurid mystery story or a novel, even a pretty good novel, I would rather have his house publish it than any in the country.

Some months ago—to illustrate the point a little further—an acquaintance of mine, an excellent scholar, published a first-class book, in every way serious and dignified and delightfully readable, on a subject connected with American history. The sales department first printed a ruinous and disgusting catchpenny sub-title on the book, and then wrapped it in a blazing red'n yaller jacket exactly befitting the latest thriller. Another acquaintance mentioned to me lately a magazine article that he was writing, descriptive of some archæological discoveries which he had made in Mexico; and he said that the editor had admonished him to "give the article a Lindbergh lead." There is no fault to be found with these procedures, obviously. In Europe, however, the exigencies of publishing do not require work of this character to take on the appearance of being deliberately aimed at ignorance and vulgarity, and if they did take it on, their sale would be retarded by it rather than promoted.

Another necessity forced upon the production of literature in America is that of being mechanically imitative. There has always been imitation. Rabelais had imitators in the sixteenth century, Dickens had them in the nineteenth. But we can hardly say that imitation has ever before been organized into a large-scale industry. Some one, I think Miss Roseborough, though I am not quite sure, has said most aptly that a literary success in America is something as much as possible like something that was once done pretty well. We may analyze one popular "run" of books for evidence of this. Our civilization is characterized by a complete absence of any idea of privacy; it refuses to recognize it as an individual right. A great general curiosity, of a low type, concerning personalities appears in the literary market as an "interest in biography." Mr. Lytton Strachey writes a book that just hits this interest. At once publishers feel the pressure to produce books as much like it as possible; and this pressure is communicated to writers. The exact nature of this interest becomes apparent as another book or two hit the mark, and succeeding books take their bearings accordingly; and then almost overnight a "school" of debunking, pornography, gossip, and garrulity comes into being.

* * *

All this, besides being bad for publishers' ideals and bad for authors, is bad for literature. There is an exact literary equivalent for Gresham's law, that "bad money drives out good." The incurious acceptance of the ordinary commercial sex novel, for instance—to mention another recent popular run—confuses judgment on a treatment such as Turgeniev, say, bestows on sex. Sex, next to stomach, is humanity's lowest common denominator, and writers who magnify it for popularity, and publishers who exploit it for the gain that this popularity brings, do so in disparagement of a type of literature which while treating sex quite as frankly, keeps it in its normal proportions.

The general aspect of our literature impresses me as uninteresting; and its relative lack of interest seems to me chiefly due to the two fundamental differences between American and European literary practice that I have here discussed. The indifferences to craftsmanship and the strictly mercantile view of literature that prevail here are nothing to make a fuss about, or turn up one's nose at; on the contrary, considering the quality of our civilization at large, they appear to be natural and normal developments, about which nothing can be done. Literature is symptomatic, and an uninteresting collective life, a life that is not "lived from a great depth of being," can hardly be very rich in an interesting literature. Hence what I have said here should not be taken as by way of complaint, for I have none to make. If our collective life becomes interesting, if it acquires depth and savor, our literature may be expected to give evidence accordingly. If not, then not.

William J. Locke, who died last week after an illness of some duration, was "a man of great versatility" says *John o'London's Weekly*. "The son of a Trinidad banker, he was at first intended to follow in his father's footsteps, and graduated in mathematics at Cambridge. But Cambridge also developed in him such a deep love of painting that he decided to take it up as a career. He went to study in Paris, only to realize within a few months that he had made a mistake. Then he began to write fiction, but without much success. The story was once circulated that he carefully preserved 800 rejection slips, but it was denied by Mrs. Locke. However, until he could obtain a sure footing as a writer he took a post as a teacher in Scotland. He taught—not mathematics, not painting, and not English, but languages! While engaged in this work he wrote his first novel, 'At the Gates of Samaria.'

"In 1897, when he was thirty-four, he branched out in an entirely new direction, becoming secretary of the Royal Institute of British Architects, although he once confessed that he could not draw a plan to save his life. His duties were purely secretarial, and he devoted all his evenings at this time to writing novels. The success of 'The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne' and 'The Beloved Vagabond' induced him to devote himself entirely to literary work, and since 1909 he has published on an average one novel every year. Several of them have been turned into plays."

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Kaleidoscopic Russia

THE BYSTANDER. By MAXIM GORKY. Translated by B. G. Guerney. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1930. $3.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER KAUN

IN the original, Gorky's last novel bears the title of "Klim Samgin," and the subtitle of "Forty Years." Therein we see his double purpose: the delineation of the main character in the story, and the portrayal of the last four decades of Russian life.

Some four years ago, on an amethyst-golden Sorrento afternoon, Gorky read aloud a fragment from "Klim Samgin"—the ballad of Christ giving a "perpetual" ruble to Vassily the drunkard. Gorky is a fine reader, and the impression was obviously powerful. Yet his eyes of a sad old dog looked around eagerly, and he anxiously pressed for criticism. He explained that this novel was to be his ultimate test as a writer. One recalled, however, that thus he had regarded more than one of his former works, until they were written and dismissed from his mind in favor of the next "ultimate test." Gorky has never enjoyed the quiescence of one who has arrived, and even now, when he is past sixty, he is youthfully impatient with his attainments.

He spoke on that afternoon, and on succeeding ones, of his plan to weld the history of the last forty years of Russia, "as he knew it personally," with the inner growth of his fictional characters. One noted, though, that of the former he talked less readily, with less of a creative joy, than of Klim Samgin, of Lydia, of Varavka, of the other multitudinous inventions that people his novel. It seemed, then, strange that Gorky whose strength lay in reproducing the factual, the personally experienced, should feel more sure and at ease with his imagination than with his experience. One may understand this better now, after reading two completed volumes of the novel and the first chapters of the third, appearing now in "Zvezda" (by the way, though in three volumes, the novel is not a trilogy, as the "Nation" reviewer misstates).

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What Gorky has set out to write is not a historical novel, in the sense in which "War and Peace" is one. Tolstoy had no difficulty in blending his Rostovs and Bolkonskys with Napoleon, Alexander, and other historic personages, because they all belonged to a more or less crystallized past. Gorky has faced the task of presenting one of the most eventful periods in Russian history, of which he has been a contemporary, and a dynamically participating contemporary at that. He has felt the lack of perspective and the impossibility of complete detachment in treating events and social currents of such personal concern and proximity. It was necessary to efface himself as a biased observer, and to find a substitute in Klim Samgin, an antipathetic character endowed with cold skepticism and analytic objectivity. "The Bystander" is therefore an apt title for the English version of "Klim Samgin," though Gorky is not responsible for its choice.

Through the eyes of this substitute we are made to watch the bewildering Russian panorama, not in its cosy remoteness, but as a disconcerting immediacy. We miss the comfort of a historical novel, in which everything has been made clear and definite by the obliging author. Rather do we share the discomfort of contemporary Russians who lived in the chaos of an unduly protracted period of storm and stress. We speed headlong from the spectacular 'seventies, reverberating with Terroristic explosions and culminating in the assassination of Alexander II, through the arid 'eighties, drabbish with pseudo-Tolstoyan passivity and Chekhovian whimpering, and into the mad 'nineties, when a hothouse industrialization was foisted upon a rustic, famished country, when erstwhile peasants, stolid and pious, turned over night into militant proletarians, when the intelligentsia tried to digest a chop-suey of Marx-Nietzsche-Ibsen-Oscar Wilde-Verlaine-Plekhanov-Lenin-Mikhailovsky-Cchernov. We stop to take breath, as we close the first volume, at the Nizhni-Novgorod Fair, where we see Nicholas II, the puny czar of a gigantic lumbering empire, his minister of finance, Sergey Witte, builder of state vodka-shops and of a papier-mâché industrial prosperity, and other notables, among them the wily mandarin, Li-Hung-Chang, bribed by Witte to sell Russia various concessions in China, which, indirectly, brought about the war with Japan, and more recently, the Sino-Soviet opera bouffe.

All this we see with the eyes of Klim Samgin, the unreal youth, who is taken for what he is not by his parents and chums, and who submissively plays the rôle he is expected to play. Alone with his thoughts, Klim rebels against this farce, and vindictively doubts and derides everyone and everything. Gorky achieves in this character a magnificent *tour de force*. Constrained to act the regular young radical of the intelligentsia, Klim gains, and lends us, an intimate glimpse of the intellectual and revolutionary circles. But his corrosive skepsis saves him, and us, from swallowing whole this romantic, idealistic, verbose Russia. In this manner the author checks his personal preferences, which he is likely to harbor in these matters and he enables us to be at one and the same time observers and critics. The fear of subjectivity often prompts Gorky to avoid direct description. For example, the Hodynka catastrophe, when thousands of Muscovites were crushed to death at the coronation of Nicholas II, is brought home to us, that is to Klim, in bits and fragments, *post facto*, by means of disconnected accounts of survivors.

A tremendous canvas of Russian life unfolds before our eyes, dizzying in its colorfulness and multiplicity of action and movement. Never before has Gorky used in such a masterly fashion his gift of depicting a man or a scene in a few precisely chosen words. Perhaps he uses his faculty a bit extravagantly; the

MAXIM GORKY

abundance of faces and objects may tax our receptivity. But then, we recall the dimensions of the canvas, its Homeric proportions.

As we close the book, the question inevitably arises: Where does the author stand? Can it be possible that he shares Klim Samgin's sweeping negations? To be sure, Samgin is no more a self-portrait than Madame Bovary. In every inch of his physique and makeup Gorky is unlike his leading character. The whole study of Samgin's evolution, quests and experiences, sexual, philosophic, and political, is purely objective and outside of the author's personality. In fact, as I have suggested before, Samgin is to Gorky an antipathetic character. Yet, this antipathy for the person of Samgin granted, nowhere in the book is it evinced for Samgin's ratiocination and analytic conclusions. No author, however objective, can completely hide his sentiments; we probe them by intuition. In this case, Gorky's negative attitude toward the life he describes is felt from the first page. There is hatred for the government, but there is also contempt for the opposition groups, for the futility of the intelligentsia, for the puerility of the radical youth. The people, the sacred myth in whose behalf the revolutionary struggle has been waged for more than a hundred years, the people are presented without any romantic tinsel: they are stupid, brutal, and primitively sly. There is hardly one positive character or scene in this comprehensive picture of Russia.

How shall we reconcile the absence in this book of any good word for the revolution with Gorky's revolutionary past, his repeated imprisonment under the czar, his intimacy with Lenin, his triumphant return to Soviet Russia, and his declarations of enthusiasm for the present order? It has always been so. For nearly forty years Gorky the artist has had collisions with Gorky the thinker and citizen. In his non-fiction writings he sounded a militant optimism, a faith in man and in the collective will of humanity, a fervent devotion to the revolutionary cause. In his best fiction, and in his autobiographic masterpieces, he has been successful mainly in showing the seamy side of life. When pressed for an explanation, Gorky tells you that he accentuates the evil in order to combat it, and replace it with beauty and goodness. One must admit that both as artist and citizen Gorky has loomed large on the Russian horizon, regardless of contradictions and collisions.

Black and White

POOR NIGGER. By ORIO VERGANI. Translated from the Italian by W. W. HOBSON. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co. 1930. $2.50.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

THE negro, it seems, is exciting more and more interest, not only in this country, but abroad as well. A colored choir has sung in Westminster Abbey; and an Italian has written a book about the negro in Europe. "Poor Nigger" is interesting for the difference between the conditions it shows and those with us; it shows a more primitive savage against a more mature civilization. George, the leading character, is at the beginning a naked pickaninny in a starched shirt-front, playing outside a French army post in Africa. He is taken up by various employers, drifts to France knowing scarcely a hundred words of French, becomes a boxer, and at last a celebrity—for though the natural contrast between the races is sharper, the social cleavage is far less sharp.

The psychology of this African, straight out of the jungle into the book, is of course much simpler than that of the Negroes in American literature. There is not the inherited recollection of slavery of "The Emperor Jones," the adaptation of alien gods of "The Green Pastures," nor the revolt against discrimination of our negro writers themselves. George has instead an utter simplicity that is very appealing, a wistfulness, a vast good nature, that are true to the best of the negro as we know him, and an occasional burst of ferocity more barbaric than the more diluted atavisms of "The Emperor Jones." This is enough for an interesting and appealing character, but Signor Vergani has an uncontrollable Latin wit that sometimes leads him to give George more than this, and to give him too much. For instance, when he wakes in a disordered hotel room:

> The telephone, which had been thrown on to the floor, was sleeping like a dog on a leash. If his swollen black lips had permitted him to whistle, he would have summoned it to his bedside.

But would *he* have entertained that conceit? And again, his rival in love insolently gives him his choice of money or a licking, and throws the money on the floor; George fights and beats him, and then takes the money, remarking that he is a professional. That wit, that sense of the dramatic, that "pride that apes humility," all are excellent for, say, Ruy Blas, but they are not right for George as he has been presented.

The scenes and atmospheres are everywhere excellent. The author appears to know boxing well. He writes with an enthusiasm that is infectious, and yet is tempered by a calm irony. He can say:

> Among the boxers the little coquetries of the profession became fashionable: the perfunctory hand-shake at the commencement of a fight, the radiant smile after receiving a hard blow, and the brief pretence of having been touched below the belt, with the object of being able to agree with a generous smile to overlook the offense and go on with the fight.

And he can also write an account of a championship fight, calling it "The Forest Path," which carries one away.

But though the book is almost uniformly good in details, one has the feeling that the author has too often allowed himself to be distracted from his main purpose, until he almost loses sight of it. "Poor Nigger" would be a better book if he had tried to make it more, or less, a tragedy.

"Poor Nigger" is in conception a tragedy, ending with George's downfall and death; but until that conclusion, it is impossible for an American reader not to feel that George is remarkably well off. He is exploited, but he is never humiliated. And if he sells his skill at boxing for much less than it is worth, he has all that he wants, and as Sancho Panza points out, in that case there is no more to be said; the fault lies not so much in the rascality of George's white promoters as in the limited range of his own desires. If this seems callous, the fault is with Signor Vergani, who demands for George so much more pity than he deserves that one may perhaps give him rather less. The author promises, by the title, by the tone of the opening chapter, by every implication throughout, that he will give us a trag-

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edy; and what he gives is the story of a boy who starts with literally nothing and becomes European champion at his weight and contender for the world's title—a position far better than that of laborers of any color or country—, and this rise is steady until the end of the penultimate chapter. The tragedy, when it does come, is extraordinarily hurried, and curiously vague. George goes to America, where the world's championship is, and then there is a chapter of dark hints:

> There are in America tens of thousand of boxers, and one can fall into bad hands. There are thieving managers, there are promoters who do not pay up and go off to Mexico, leaving the boxer with a broken nose to face a hostile crowd. There are Negroes ready to serve him, but also ready to swindle him. It is forbidden to drink, but if one is ready to pay for it, one can drink a kind of alcohol which kills five thousand people in a year.

And so on. In the end a delirious George dies before an African idol in a shop window, an ending that might have been effective, but which seems artificial as the conclusion of a catastrophe which is already hasty to the point of seeming forced. One suspects that Signor Vergani does not know America at first hand.

A New Van Dine Tale

THE SCARAB MURDER CASE. By S. S. Van Dine. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by Eugene Reynal

STRETCHED upon the floor of Dr. Bliss' famous private museum lay Benjamin Kyle, his skull crushed by a statue of Sakhmet, the Egyptian Goddess of Vengeance.

So begins the new Van Dine mystery. I recommend it to you not only as his best but as very close to the top of all detective stories. The element of fantasy that tended to mar the "Bishop Murder Case" is here carefully restrained, and by confining the suspects to five members of the household, all introducted at the beginning, Van Dine gives the reader every opportunity to strive for the solution himself.

In the "Scarab Murder Case" the ever resourceful Philo Vance emerges slightly more suave than in his previous cases. He is complete master of the situation, parcelling out to his associates scraps of information that he picks up, but never exposing until the end the inner workings of his mind. In spite of the author's explicitness, it was not until reaching page 234 that I felt sure of the murderer.

S. S. Van Dine is an author whose significance might easily be underrated. He has succeeded five times in writing consistently fine detective novels which have reached a unique position in popular esteem, and which have a literary quality worthy of more than passing attention. He is a man of real cultivation, an author, as every one now knows, who made his first reputation in more serious fields. He is erudite, and yet he is able to introduce the most abstruse pieces of information in such a way that they tend to compliment the average reader's intelligence. His plots are ingenious and worked out in the greatest detail and his characters are true, three-dimensional, vivid human beings. I have long felt that the cause of his amazing popularity lay in his ability to pass the "high hat" over to the reader. His highly specialized knowledge in a great variety of subjects is presented in such a way that you almost feel it is your own. And though I know it is offensive to a good many readers, I feel sure it is that quality, that ability to set the reader at ease when he is taken far outside the province of his own knowledge, that makes Van Dine one of the most widely read of mystery writers.

"The Scarab Murder Case" might almost serve as a handbook on Egyptology. Yet the story rushes on to a series of exciting climaxes, carefully planned, artistically constructed, and ingeniously baffling. It is a joy to read and ranks number one in the season's mysteries.

"The various reputations left by Charles Cotton, who was born just three hundred years ago, have never coalesced in one," says the *Manchester Guardian*. "There is Cotton the translator of Montaigne, Cotton the author of a coarse burlesque of Virgil, Cotton the authority on the growing of trees, Cotton who wrote the Wonders of the Peake, Cotton the lyric poet, and Cotton who called Izaak Walton father, and who joined his name to Walton's for ever."

Anybody's Money's Worth

THE WEEK-END LIBRARY. Issue of 1930. Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1930. $2.50.

Reviewed by Henry Walcott Boynton

THIS fat book renews an odd publishing stunt which has proved successful. Earlier issues have been well received. This volume goes forth with the useful backing of the Book-of-the-Month Club. It is aimed at the ordinary citizen, as "the best buy ever offered for the money." I wish the publisher might have restrained his salespeople from this phrase, on the general principle that good writing out not to be marketed in terms of wildcat stocks or shaving soap. But the theory is that distribution is the thing. Get your article into the customer's hands and it will work for his salvation. This *is* good writing, and its ardent sponsors may well argue that their brisk method is the way to give it a chance with the vast audience which shies so fearfully from anything deep or highbrow.

It is a piece of book-making to tickle the curiosity of any bookish buyer. Who determined its contents, and on what principle? It begins with Somerset Maugham's "Of Human Bondage," a novel of 650 close-printed pages. Then come Morley's fantasy "Where the Blue Begins" and Conrad's tale "Youth," both in larger type and on pages of different size. Follows "The Time Machine" of H. G. Wells, one of his ingenious projections of the future. This brings us two-thirds of the way through the book, all on a diet of fiction.

But here suddenly the fare changes to a miscellaneous and apparently haphazard agglomeration of literary odds and ends—sketches, yarns, essay, parody. Then you come on extracts from Lawrence's "Revolt in the Desert" and Aldous Huxley's "Jesting Pilate." And most amazingly of all, you find between Irvin Cobb's "Speaking of Operations" and the T. E. Lawrence selections, six Walt Whitman poems taken from a recent anthology. How Walt would stare and gasp at some of his neighbors here—and what a kick he would get out of fitting them into his all-receptive *catalogue humaine*. "Three-Days' Battle," from "The Saga of Billy the Kid," would assure him that there is grit still in his children and comrades of These States. Aldous Huxley's notes on America would be something of a challenge to his booming optimism. This, too he would deal with. . . .

It would be interesting to have the mechanical secret of our literary omnibus. These books and bits of books are assembled without change of typography or pagination. Are they printed from the original plates, or wafted by some photographic sleight-of-hand from the original sheets? Whatever the process, it has, I must admit, produced a marvelous "buy" for the money!

A Moses from Wall Street

COMMON STOCKS AND THE AVERAGE MAN. By J. George Frederick. New York: The Business Bourse. 1929. $4.

Reviewed by Myron M. Strain

THE important thing to remember in reading this book is that it is the distilled common sense of an extremely shrewd, widely experienced, and well informed practical economist. It would be hard to imagine anyone who has anything to do with investments reading it without interest and profit, and, if the reader does not make investment his regular occupation and study, it is probable that the profit will be of the most tangible and realizable sort.

The reason that it is important to remember this fact is that "Common Stocks and the Average Man" is one of the most thoroughly annoying books ever put on paper. Mr. Frederick has positive notions about everything from the intellectual capacity of woman to the economic effects of prohibition and style obsolescence, and he does not fear to air them freely and dogmatically. His work abounds in petty, unimportant contradictions and lapses which, if they mean what they seem to mean, are so exasperatingly fallacious that it is hard to credit him with believing them—and which have no particular bearing on his thesis in any event. It is written in great and obvious haste. Whole passages of it are couched in the most hideous and degraded form of the new language, financese, which sometimes degenerates almost into a burlesque of financese—as when we are told of "searching ratios," and advised to "contact . . . a well digested point of view" that, remarkably enough, "is not afraid to lay blame" and can even "speak up valiantly."

Why writers about financial matters usually feel under a bond to address their audience in this precise manner of stereotyped illiteracy, and even to *extend* its capacity for banality, I do not pretend to guess. As I have intimated, however, these irritating "angles" of "the picture" are more or less irrelevant and immaterial in Mr. Frederick's scheme of things, and it is profitable to look past them to the substantial value of his material and his ideas about it. His book, inspired by the October-November panic, is far more than an inquest. It is, in fact, one of the most comprehensive, sensible, and workable treatises on investing the average man's surplus earnings that has ever appeared. The author is aware of the implications of our swing toward non-political socialism through widely held common stocks, and his observations on the social aspects of our financial developments are shrewd and worthy of respect. They occupy, however, here and there in the volume, a total bulk that I should estimate at less than one quarter of the whole, and the remaining three quarters are concerned with the most direct, specific, well-informed, and enlightened counsel about investments that the average investor has ever had access to. There is a minimum of vague generalizing and a maximum of exact and sound advice as to how to estimate investment value and price, where to find needed information and how, even down to the matter of the physical accessories needed to use it. Mr. Frederick is not timid about giving real names, dates, and figures, nor using them to illustrate the procedures he recommends. Toward the end, he supplies an admirable set of thumb-nail sketches of our various industrial groups, and supplies a list of common stock "bargains." The effect of all this, in spite of a prevailingly optimistic mood, is to present a completely and wholesomely realistic, rational, and usable program to the bewildered creatures who are accustomed to being befuddled by incomprehensible theories and then bludgeoned by "cyclical panics" in investment matters. For them it was written, and to them it is strongly commended.

The Book Trade

(*Continued from page* 1059)

the greatest discretion. Should the publishers play safe and eliminate from next year's lists all but the sure-fire, certain-to-be-reasonably-sold books, the results might be horrid to contemplate. With all the uncertainties and experiments eliminated, all the "unexpected" books (like "The Bridge of San Luis Rey" and "Death Comes for the Archbishop"),—with only those stodgy productions guaranteed to sell 10,000 or so to the undiscriminating, we should have a season devoid of interest, to be followed by calamity.

If there is to be a sharp curtailment of titles, it must be accomplished with infinite discretion, and this discretion must be matched by a careful discrimination on the part of the public. They must sharpen their critical wits, refuse to buy the mediocrity, go out of their way to purchase and recommend real books.

And if it be said that the public is incapable of discriminating, the reply is, nonsense! The public referred to is that 100,000 or less of intelligent American readers whose taste, judgment, and recommendation make or mar the fortunes of all books worthy to be read.

Herr Kasimir Edschmid, whose biography-novel, "Lord Byron," has just appeared, is one of the few modern authors who have won medals at the Olympic Games. He comes of a family remarkable for its longevity.

The Saturday Review of Literature

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"Mad Shelley"

SHELLEY'S LOST LETTERS TO HARRIET. Edited by LESLIE HOTSON. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1930. $8.

MAD SHELLEY. By JAMES R. ULLMAN. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1930. $1.50.

Reviewed by H. W. GARROD
Professor of Poetry, Oxford

MR. Hotson may be accounted not only a good scholar but a lucky one. Some years since, it was his good fortune to find in the Record Office in London documents giving us the facts about the death of Christopher Marlowe. Now it is his luck to produce from the same source nine hitherto unprinted letters of Shelley to Harriet, as well as a letter to Harriet's sister Eliza written shortly after Harriet's suicide. The letters to Harriet were written between July 14, and October 25, 1814; they were produced by the Westbrooks in the Court of Chancery as evidence that Shelley was unfit to have the custody of his children. What Mr. Hotson gives us is not the originals, but officially authenticated copies—how they came to be overlooked until now he explains in his introductory pages.

The new letters were bound to be interesting; and we may perhaps be glad that it was Mr. Hotson who found them, and not someone else; for he does not pretend that they are *exciting*. When he first drew them forth from the dusty, red-taped bundle where they had lain untouched for more than a century, "fear," he says, "of finding too little or too much, made the words swim before my eyes . . . it was painfully startling to be thrown on a sudden into the midst of this the greatest convulsion of Shelley's sensitive nature." But that is Mr. Hotson's nearest approach to emotionalism. He prints his ten letters in full, with just enough of prefatory matter to make the biographical connections intelligible. But he nowhere uses exaggeration; he attempts no sort of sensationalism. "These new letters," he is honest enough to say, "add nothing which changes our conception of the essential nature of Shelley as a man." The most interesting of them is the first (indexed as the second in the Record Office; but it was clearly written within a day or two of July 14.) On July 14 Shelley had seen Harriet in London, and had acquainted her with his intention of uniting himself with Mary Godwin. He had been apprehensive how Harriet might take it. Harriet had taken it like an angel; or Shelley supposed her to have done so. He had put to her his "platonic scheme . . . of an ideal household—all three to live together, Harriet as the sister of his soul, and Mary as his wife." Not only had he put this preposterous scheme to her, but poor Harriet, apparently playing for time, had allowed him to suppose that she acquiesced in it. "My spirit turned to you for consolation," Shelley writes, in the first of the new letters, "and it found it; all that vulgar minds regard as so important was considered by you with consistent and becoming contempt. . . . For this, dearest Harriet, from my inmost Soul I thank you. This is perhaps the greatest among the many blessings which I have received, and still am destined to receive at your hands."

Confident of future blessings in store for himself from Harriet, Shelley some ten days later carried Mary off to Switzerland. From Troyes where they halted on their journey he wrote to Harriet the only letter which he addressed to her which has hitherto been known. It has passed, even with Shelley's admirers, as a curiously callous composition. Mr. Hotson's discovery places it in a new light, and does much to remove the unpleasant impression which it has left with so many persons. Shelley still supposes that he is soon to welcome Harriet to a "sweet retreat" with himself and Mary somewhere in Switzerland—he takes it as a matter of course. "You will at last find one firm and constant friend, to whom your interests will always be dear—by whom your feelings will never willingly be injured."

"He had the folly to believe all this possible," Harriet wrote. How great a folly it was Shelley himself was soon aware. "I was an idiot to expect greatness or generosity from you," he says, in a letter written towards the end of September (No. 5 of the new letters— it is not pleasant reading; neither this nor the letter following makes us like Shelley the better). But "folly" and "idiocy" are words too weak; and Mr. Ullman's "mad Shelley" comes nearer the mark. If Mr. Ullman had been a more experienced littérateur he might have made his book an excellent commentary upon Mr. Hotson's. For his book does seize, better than most books about Shelley, just that aspect of Shelley's genius which is central and determinant. Alone of men Shelley is, from first to last, wholly logical, with a logic terrifying, devastating, fearless to the verge of brutality. In a world dominated by superstition and convention it never enters his head to live otherwise than by pure reason. That "when an occasion of the sublimest virtue occurred" Harriet should be "enslaved to the vilest superstitions" is simply unintelligible to him. The terrifying innocence of his logic recognizes no taboos. Nobody in the world was ever so unutterably reasonable. We forgive him all because he was greatly logical. We forgive him all—but we call him "mad."

Just this Mr. Ullman is set to say throughout his book; and some of it he says well; and his book has enough truth in it to make one wish it a better book than it is. Mr. Ullman says everything at too great length; and he says some things twice over—not to make them better known, but because he cannot remember what he has said already. "Shelley grew, but he did not change"—that is admirably said on page 61; but it is said again in the same

From an unpublished original watercolor drawing of Shelley's grave at Rome, by Bayard Taylor.
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words on page 75. On page 71, "This was no appreciative extrovert, a passive receptacle for impressions" is less well said, and Mr. Ullman has, therefore, less excuse for repeating it on page 91 ("He was not constructed to be an appreciative extrovert, a passive receptacle for impressions".) "Whining" is an odd epithet for the guillotine; but if it was to be used at all, there was no reason for using it on page 91 as well as on page 30. Besides forgetting what he has said, Mr. Ullman occasionally supposes himself to have said something which he has forgotten to say; at any rate, on page 72, he speaks of himself as having "already sketched in brief (Shelley's) disastrous relations both with society and with individuals, his expulsion from Oxford . . . the tragedy of Harriet, the final hegira from the homeland." But if he has done so, the sketch is so much "in brief" as to be past finding. A good deal of his book is spoiled by the ambition of large generalization; and much else by the habit of rhapsody. His rhapsodic moods conduct Mr. Ullman too often into blank verse:

> The heavens may be inscrutable,
> The ceiling of the sky may be remote,
> And those who keep their court
> Beyond its arching star-paved sweep
> May be for ever silent and aloof.

When he does that on page 1, and on page 108, is still writing such sentences as

> With such a gesture and to such an end
> Did Percy Shelley live and die

(with a good deal in between which is just as bad), he must expect to be thought tiresome. He must be supposed sometimes not to know the meaning of the words he uses. Does he really mean to say (what he does say) that the "Prometheus Unbound" is "the greatest poem in the English language?" And again, when he speaks of the "Revolt of Islam" as being, "with 'Paradise Lost,' the most grandly conceived and executed narrative poem in the English language," has he weighed his words? When he says that it was granted to Goethe, Napoleon, and Shelley, "more than to any other men," "to be whole and complete expressions of the age in which they lived," he must mean it, for he says it so often.

Mr. Ullman must be judged to have set himself too grand a task and to have brought to it too grand a manner. But his book has many attractive qualities; and his main thesis—that the life and poetry of Shelley must be viewed as a continuous and consistent logical process—is a valuable one. "The unheard-of simplicity of the process is matched only by the unheard-of innocence of the spirit from which it took its being"—that could hardly be better said, and is a real help to the understanding of Shelley.

There is no such person, by the way, as Lord Elden. One must believe in Beaudelaire because one meets him so often.

Debating Humanism

By MARY M. COLUM

MOST of the people who attended the humanist debate in Carnegie Hall "came out by the same door as in they went": there was not even "great argument about it and about"; none of the debaters got very near the subject at all, except, perhaps, Henry Canby for a few minutes, during which he certainly succeeded in revealing the Babbittian humanism as narrow sectarianism. He gave his own definition of a humanist as one committed to restore those values which differentiate life from régime and make life more desirable for human beings. Professor Babbitt devoted his address chiefly to an attack on those critics who had found fault with his doctrine; he assumed, as he generally does, that everyone, everywhere, naturally knows what humanism is, and went "about it and about." Carl Van Doren made a witty and brilliant address which had something to do with love, but nothing to do with Professor Babbitt. The three debaters did not debate; they made three separate addresses; each had a private brand of humanism of his own, and did not greatly concern himself with the other fellow's. So, on the whole, nobody who went to that debate, knows any more than he did before about the kind of humanism which has been the subject for such discussion for months past. A great many of the audience have either come to the conclusion that there never did exist the thing known as the New Humanism, or that, if it did, it was something like a neurosis, and that once the repressed reasons for its existence were brought to light the thing itself faded away into non-entity. I, for one, am very sorry for this: for if only this thing called Humanism had been alive with enough vigor to provide some conflict, how good it would have been for intellectual life in America. If only some few youths passionate in their belief in humanism could have got drunk over it, or been arrested for it, or done anything at all about it with fervor, how inspiriting it would have been! In Paris or Dublin, if they had believed in the idea at all, they would have done such things about it. The Dublin that bred the modern Irish writers, would have had to station police here and there in the hall, to keep order, to chuck out the more recalcitrant spirits, and to keep the more unrestrained from interrupting the speakers. In Paris they would have stayed up half the night in the hall, and wound up the argument at dawn in a café. In both of these cities they would have charged only as much admission as would have paid for the hall, for the protagonists and antagonists would have been so furiously eager about it that they would have had to have it out in public.

But the chief tenets of the humanist doctrine, decorum and the will to refrain, seem to have so profoundly affected its followers that they are incapable of any indecorous enthusiasm. In Paris, a few weeks ago, the writer of this article was seriously told that in New York policemen discoursed on humanism to passers-by, and that bootleggers could no longer be depended on to deliver their goods punctually, as they were becoming so immersed in Professor Babbitt's doctrine. In Carnegie Hall, however, we looked in vain for Professor Babbitt's eager fol-

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lowers: they were, if present, too much in the background even to escort their leader to a taxi. This is all a great pity. If the *Bookman*, which has made itself more or less the official organ of humanism, had really enough devotion to it to engage, not Carnegie Hall, but a good-sized theatre, and organize a debate on the subject, and allow the audience to interrogate the speakers—then if nobody could convince anybody, everybody, at least would have been stimulated, there would have been some intellectual conflict, those present might even have got some glimmer of enlightenment about the ideas that may come to dominate us in this epoch. I believe that the audience at the debate on Friday went away disappointed. Many of them felt that Professor Babbitt ought to have had a hearing in New York under different circumstances; Carnegie Hall was so big that only the people in the first few rows could hear him anyway; he got no chance either to meet or to cope with his opponents, and he certainly looked, as do all lovers of ideas, the sort of person who could put up a good fight for what he believed.

He proved, in fact, a most sympathetic and interesting figure—a white-haired man, very simple, very direct, without any cosmopolitan sophistication, his sensitive hands nervously opening and closing over a white handkerchief; his appearance, his manner, his speech all informed by the extreme sincerity of his convictions. The audience gazed hopefully at him. They were indeed a remarkably interesting audience. It happens that in New York the percentage of people interested in ideas is very large, and a greater number of people came to the humanist debate than would have come to any similar debate in any city in the world—that I am sure of. It was only that the passionate protagonists and antagonists of humanism that the audience came to see and hear did not seem to exist. From their faces it was evident that they represented a high intellectual level, as well as different races and classes in society. There were elderly men and women to whom life had taught tolerance; young college men and women with a slick knowledge of modern movements and modern literature; eager, intellectual Jewish faces, a few child-like Japanese faces to whom the wisdom of the East was not what it had been cracked up to be and to whom the wisdom of the West was enthralling; some violently emotional Irish faces; disciplined German faces bent on knowing something—a grand audience, mostly young, generous, and eager to be led, looking for some goal to which they might direct themselves. But the leadership for which they were searching was not in Carnegie Hall. The debate had been got up as a commercial speculation by a lecture-agency banking on the desire of this rudderless age to listen to any doctrine that offers a little guidance. Now gospels or philosophies cannot be sold to people though they can be presented to them or forced upon them. If the cohorts of humanism had been really serious they could have saved it from commercial exploitation besides giving Professor Babbitt a real chance.

Professor Babbitt is the strangest figure in intellectual America—at once a man of great intellect and narrow outlook, a man of enfranchised mind and, at the same time, a Philistine. His intellect is biased, but yet on many planes entirely free from the danger of being bamboozled by fake, flummery, or sentimentalism. It happens that his intellect is too thinly touched by imagination and emotion to have a really large territory open to its comprehension. He places emotion, indeed, on the naturalistic level, and the naturalistic he calls the lowest of the three levels on which man can live, the upper two being the humanistic and the religious. This low evaluation of emotion is repeated by all his followers and has the effort of warping their attitude to literature—making some of their statements indeed highly ridiculous. Professor Babbitt himself can hardly write a page or, apparently, deliver a speech, without having some sort of a gibe at an artist. In his speech in Carnegie Hall he treated Verlaine to a great line of mockery—Verlaine, said he, who, with a patch over his eye, is said to have told an audience at Oxford that a poet cannot write without having experience of life. . . . Verlaine, said Professor Babbitt scornfully, for whom life-experience meant hospitals. . . . Yes, and one may add, physical degradation and pain and Arthur Rimbaud. But does our great humanist imagine that he has lived more deeply than Verlaine on any of the three planes into which he has divided the experience of living, or that many people have as much right to express his experience as Verlaine had?

With Professor Babbitt's literary criticism I have dealt in some detail elsewhere, and I do not wish to repeat myself here. But even as one who thinks his literary criticism is frequently only a little short of barbarous Philistinism, I can yet express my belief that there is no man or woman who loves the disinterested pursuit of truth who does not admire Professor Babbitt, though the domain of what he comprehends is narrow and barely touches on the arts. His hatred of fake, even if he sometimes believes things to be fake which represent high truth, his power of seeing through specious bunkum, has made him one of the most healthy intellectual influences in America. He has seen that the real danger of modern America is not so much in succumbing to materialism as in succumbing to false spirituality, false mysticism, and false philosophies. He saw through the utilitarian idealism and sentimentalism of President Eliot's ideas of education which have still a strangle-hold on educational institutions in this country. His own idea of a university is as free from utilitarianism as was Newman's, and as little deluded by the pretentions of science—not, as he said at Carnegie Hall, that he is against science as such, but only against science that has overstepped its boundaries. He has been as much against "service" and Rotarianism as ever Mr. Mencken was. This has been his great value in American intellectual life: his power in the domain he understands of tracking down truth to its lair and holding it up triumphantly for all to see, his power of penetrating through bunkum no matter what masks it assumes—masks of "ideals" of "service," or "patriotism." What he has stood for has been related to the virtues, the simplicity, the good morals of the fathers of this republic—the honesty and beauty of early Colonial furniture and early Colonial architecture. He has been more than a little like Cato the Censor who also disliked the expansive life and the expansive desires. Like Cato repeating "Delenda est Carthago" for years and years until it finally became a battle-cry to his countrymen, Professor Babbitt has repeated "Delendus est Romanticismus" and "the inner check" and "the will to refrain" until actually a period has come when these things are a sort of rallying cry and have some relation to the needs of the time.

It is what he calls his humanism that is difficult to understand. He does not seem to be able to tell us any more than that there are three levels by which man lives—the naturalistic, humanistic, and religious—that there is a law for man and a law for thing, and that the observance of the law for man gives the humanistic virtues of moderation, commonsense, and decency. The humanist exercises the will to refrain and is governed by "the inner check" and "the law of measure." No doubt there are some people of such rich and generous endowments and fine mentality that they can attain their highest possibilities by the exercise of "the will to refrain" and the "inner check," but there are certainly others in whom the "will to refrain" and the "inner check" would only counsel miserly prudences and timid living and wretched cowardices—yes, even denying their Master thrice or selling him for thirty pieces of silver. If we have first of all a good objective code of conduct (and as Professor Babbitt admits the bottom has fallen out of a large part of the old objective code) to which men in the mass are not only willing, but have the strength to subscribe, then by the exercise of the inner check and the will to refrain, the code and the check between them will achieve the sort of man who makes a good unit in society—a high enough ideal, I admit. And, as we know, the mass of men have always been in the habit of regarding as virtues those qualities which make a man a good workable unit in the state, as they are in the habit of regarding those qualities as unvirtuous, or even as vices, which make a man a less reliable unit in the state.

There is no doubt that Verlaine, with a patch on his eye and his experience of hospitals and Arthur Rimbaud, was not a good unit of society, but when we come to talk, not of the solid citizens of the state, but of its glories, then we can include Verlaine, for Verlaine is one of the glories of France and of literature. And here we come to the crux of the matter in Professor Babbitt's criticism and the criticism of his followers—he and some of them are excellent critics of man as a workable unit in society, but of the man who is one of the glories of the world and of art, for him Professor Babbitt has too frequently the narrowest condemnation. It is, to be sure, good for the state that a man should moderately love a modest wife, but it is better for literature that he should immoderately love Mary Fitton or Lesbia, and to immoderately love Mary Fitton required not only the virtue of being deeply touched by life, but that virtue of *grandeur d'âme* to the side of which all literature is committed, but which has no place amongst the humanist virtues. Professor Babbitt would have us believe that if a man has not what he calls the humanist virtues he can be condescended to, as he has condescended to Verlaine, to Baudelaire, to so many great writers and so many great men. The ability to produce great poetry, or great literature of any kind—even the kind of criticism which Professor Babbitt sometimes seems to have the ambition to write—requires many different sorts of powers; it involves not only the power to be deeply touched by life, but also such experience of life as will galvanize those powers. What galvanized the powers of Verlaine were perhaps sickly experiences with hospitals, perhaps that unedifying connection with Rimbaud, and these experiences wedded to certain natal gifts made Verlaine a great poet. Why should it seem odd that Verlaine should have told Oxford that no man can become a poet without experience of life? A man may, perhaps, become a philosopher by locking himself up in a room and studying early Buddhism, or the Ethics of Aristotle; he may become a good citizen by diligently obeying the law of measure and the will to refrain, but he does not become a great writer in that way. When a man is one of the glories of a state it is not always necessary to demand that he be also a good unit in the citizenry, nor can we achieve any measure in literary criticism by making such demands. What we object to in the New Humanism is what Professor Babbitt objects to in science—it has overstepped its limits. There are heights of living it never reaches and for which it cannot exercise any power of measurement. When it tries to, we have the kind of criticism Professor Babbitt has made on so much literature, we have such comments as he made the other night on Verlaine, and we have the incredible fatuity of Professor Norman Foerster's condescension to Shakespeare. Was it not Whistler who pointed out that art hardened her heart before the measured virtues of the worthy Swiss and left them to their cuckoo-clocks while she took refuge in Nanking with a drunken opium-eater, painting coy maidens on a blue china plate?

An Italian Novel

THE HOAX. By ITALO SVEVO. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by THEODORE PURDY, JR.

TRIESTE, once a bone of contention between Italy and her Austrian neighbor, also possesses a modest but not wholly negligible claim to fame as the home during many years of James Joyce. The titanic labor of writing "Ulysses" took place largely in the then Austrian seaport, while in the intervals the author taught English to ambitious young business men of the region. In 1906 chance brought him as pupil a middle aged man called Ettore Schmitz, half Italian but educated in Germany, who later became one of his cloest friends. Under the pseudonym of Italo Svevo this man had already published two novels without attracting much attention. In 1923, aided by Joyce, his "La Coscienza di Zeno" was better received, both in Italian and in its French version. Five years later Italo Svevo was killed in a motor accident, and promptly began to receive something like his due in tributes from his countrymen and the world at large.

While never popular or famous in the d'Annunzian sense, he had come to have a considerable influence at the end of his life, particularly in Paris where Joyce's championship of his talent did much to aid him. It is surprising that until now nothing of his has appeared in English. "The Hoax" is not, in fact, a very remarkable or representative example of Svevo's work, and it will be necessary to await the publication of "Zeno" in English to fully gauge his worth. A long short-story, written in 1928, "The Hoax" tells simply the simple tale of a writer on whom a rather cruel practical joke is played. His violent reaction, physical as well as mental, causes him to "beat up" the perpetrator, and so surprises and encourages him that he prepares to go on with life a better and more optimistic man. With a notable economy of means and sobriety of style this little incident in a little life is endowed with quiet and sure vitality. Within its clear limits "The Hoax" is an excellent thing indeed.

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The Bowling Green

John Mistletoe X.

TO remind you how long ago 1910 was, it was still possible in that year to sail from Philadelphia in a liner (the good old *Friesland*) that had a clipper bow and a bowsprit. And it makes it seem equally remote to remember finding our classmate J. H. under the trees not far from Barclay Hall, preparing himself for the final examinations that spring. He looked up from his notebook with a face of crisis. "It is absolutely impossible to believe in God," he said sadly, "if you take Biology 2." He surrendered God reluctantly, for he was writing much verse at the time, and to tutoyer the Deity is a great resource for young poets; as is also getting the word *harlot* into print. There is a college notebook of R. L. Stevenson's in the library at Haverford, in which he rhymed it with *scarlet;* it delights me to think how pleased he must have been.

But at Haverford, Mistletoe and his cronies thought of literature as something definitely Beyond the Horizon. They had their first great thrill in Keats; and they read, in ecstatic midnight coterie, *Songs from Vagabondia* and *A Shropshire Lad.* (What poet's heart has not responded to Housman's little note in his *Last Poems*: "I can no longer expect to be revisited by the continuous excitement under which in the early months of 1895 I wrote the greater part of my other book.") But actual practitioners of belles lettres were rare in our suburban academe, and we held literature in proportionate veneration. It was something not encountered in being. When we were lectured by famous visitors it was on such safe topics as Browning or Coleridge, or Eschatology. This last we attended vaguely expecting something about Fish, with lantern slides. There were some lectures by Barrett Wendell, too, but about what I venture no classmate could conceivably retrieve. Perhaps about Cotton Mather? but the young hobbledehoys were too amused by the good man's Harvard accent to pay much heed to the matter.

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At Oxford, on the other hand, Mistletoe found himself under the influence of literature as a present living reality. I suppose all arts and knowledges proceed by their own young contagions and discipleships. To boys at Oxford about 1910-13, Belloc and Chesterton were Dioscuri in Chief who typified the glamor of journalism. Perhaps you have forgotten how those two had the world at their feet in that happy time. Reading *The Path to Rome* it seemed to an Oxford freshman that there never had been such fresh, merry, volatile and humorous writing. And in Chesterton's manly verse, what a blast of beauty and anger—even sending the boy back to his own Whitman, who had troubled him, when G. K. C. trumpeted:

> I find again the book we found, I feel the hour that flings
> Far out of fish-shaped Paumanok some cry of cleaner things;
> And the Green Carnation withered, as in forest fires that pass,
> Roared in the wind of all the world ten million leaves of grass.

They were of the great breed of Fleet Street, these two; they incarnated all our vague romantic notions of Dr. Johnson and the Cheshire Cheese and steak-and-kidney pudding. They suggested late hours, burly vigor, and gallant sortie against all things cruel and pettifogging. Certainly their talk about beer increased our orders to the college buttery; how often young collegians are busy sentimentally trying to catch up with the potations of some middle-aged journalist who has by that time been put on a diet.

Let me not speak too lightly. These boyish influenzas are of immense value: later events sometimes temper them, but by those warm flushes of excitement literature passes on her vocation. In the long army of those who live by the pen, we do not forget our loyalty to our former officers. Ah, my Hilaire, do I sometimes see in your later work a touch of bitterness toward this now very different world? Remember there are those, names you never knew, who remember the whiff of your saddle-leather as you rode at the head of the troop, whose nerves are stung now as they were 20 years ago, by such as this:—

> SEPTEMBER
>
> I, from a window where the Meuse is wide,
> Looked eastward out to the September night;
> The men that in the hopeless battle died
> Rose, and deployed, and stationed for the fight;
> A brumal army, vague and ordered large
> For mile on mile by some pale general;
> I saw them lean by companies to the charge,
> But no man living heard the bugle-call.
>
> And fading still, and pointing to their scars,
> They fled in lessening crowd, where gray and high
> Dawn lay along the heaven in misty bars;
> But watching from that eastern casement, I
> Saw the Republic splendid in the sky,
> And round her terrible head the morning stars.

I remember my tutor Mr. Herbert Fisher, then acting as chief editor of the Home University Library (a series of very spirited little books that escaped into print at that time, and was as exciting to us as the Modern Library to later youths) showing me the manuscript of Chesterton's *Victorian Age in Literature,* which had just reached him. It was all in G. K. C's strong curly hand, and I looked at it with reverence. I believe it was the first practicable book manuscript I had ever seen. And yet no omen was manifest, no tremulation of the shelves, to warn me how many I was to encounter.

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So these two paladins were very real: not wraiths at all, but visible in print and in flesh. The *Eye-Witness,* that lively weekly that G. K. C. edited, had to be seized in the common room when you could get it, there were always so many watching for it. When Belloc lectured on Rabelais one afternoon, the great hall of the Examination Schools was crowded to the window-sills. Without a scrap of notes, bundling up the skirts of his gown behind his squat person, he held us spellbound for nearly two hours on the doctrine of Exuberance.

Of course there were other figures too. There was a delicate rumor that Max Beerbohm was an Oxford man; confirmed by the appearance of *Zuleika Dobson,* which we all bought and read at once, nor could we ever thereafter pass the statued railings of the Sheldonian without remembering that perspiration started to the brows of those Roman emperors when Zuleika came to Oxford. The picture of Abimelech V. Oover the Rhodes Scholar seemed a little coppery for that silver satirist, and Mistletoe's premature chivalry was perhaps distressed by Max's genial raillery of "The virguncules of Somerville and Lady Margaret Hall" (viz. our Oxford co-eds) whom he had his own reasons for sentimentalizing. He pondered Mr. Dover, who was distressed by "the quaint old English custom of not making public speeches after private dinners," and consoled himself by the reflection that Max had probably never seen a Rhodes Scholar. *Zuleika Dobson,* so highly praised by non-Oxonians, is only half successful. It begins enchantingly, but it dries up. *The Oxford Circus,* by Messrs Miles and Mortimer, published some years later, seems to me more maliciously amusing, though only the children of Balliol can fully savor all its sinister jabs.

Profiles on the grand scale came over that young horizon too. He saw Henry James and Robert Bridges receive their honorary degrees. The meandering Jacobite style was tenderly parodied, I think, by the Public Orator in his Latin presentation. As for Dr. Bridges, surely one of the poets most truly honored by those capable of honor, it remains strange not that his work is scantly known but that sonnets and lyrics so gravely beautiful should have survived at all.

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I wish I could find my old copy of the *English Review* in which Masefield burst upon us. Was it in the spring of 1912, or 1911? Almost overnight everyone was reading *The Everlasting Mercy.* Does a thrill like that come to every undergraduate generation? Somehow I doubt it. Put yourself back into that setting: spring in those gardens, the chestnut trees like huge chandeliers, the street-band playing Gilbert and Sullivan airs in the pink sunset of the High; white flannels and strawberries and tea-baskets on the Cher—and that blue magazine in which suddenly poetry spoke to us as it should. We could not know it then, of course, but one can see now that through all the English-writing world there was, about 1912, a stirring and a movement of truth. It was so in America too, where Vachel Lindsay was beginning to peddle his Rhymes for Bread. In the too secure and gracious life of Oxford, Masefield came to us with a glorious twinge. Poetry was still alive, and still had all its greatest things to say, or say again. Poor Masefield I suppose paid the penalty: the undergraduate literary clubs of almost every college in both Oxford and Cambridge wrote and asked him to come and speak. Mistletoe still has Mr. Masefield's very polite little note from Well Walk, Hampstead—which reminded them that Keats too was real—regretting he could not accept the kind invitation of the "Shibli Bagarags," one of those brief literary sodalities to botanize asphodel.

(*To be continued*)

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Dark Africa

THE TRADER'S WIFE. By JEAN KENYON MACKENZIE. New York: Coward, McCann. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by BERNARDINE K. SCHERMAN

A TRADER and his wife take ship from Newport to the west coast of Africa—a trader returning to the jungles, and a wife chattering and romantic—back in the days before the Civil War. Their story lies deep in the forests along the Nkomi. Over its glassy surface they move inland in their canoe. Along its banks they hear "the legato of the Mpongwe and the staccato of the Fang." Dark bodies leap to incredibly accurate rhythms outside the walls of their compound. Irresistibly Africa has drawn the trader back—Africa of monkey screeches and bird calls, the river "speaking" upon the little beach, the ooze of inlets, and the absorbing pursuit of its barter with the natives—an Africa where human relationships sink into insignificance. And while he lets himself down once more, deep within its enchantment, the woman chatters in their little clearing, and laughs through the forest. Into the ladylike phrases of refined verse, she puts the great trees and the river and the gleaming black bodies. She laughs in the face of Africa—while her husband looks on silently, and askance. In her ignorance and naiveté she seems to be strangely beyond its evil power. Intermittent fevers bring her close to death, no one speaks with her in the everlasting jungle but a morose trader, and the native women who stand about in circles, gazing curiously on the many clothes that hide her, making up songs like children. She is uncomplaining and good-natured. Yet her very insensitiveness gnaws at the man. Instead of relief in her determined optimism, he feels helpless irritation spreading over him. In another clime it would have been annoyance beyond measure. But in the jungle anger is worn down to acceptance, and then to a dull obliviousness. Irascibility is tempered by the heat and humidity.

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She laughs in the face of Africa—until the day when a great wailing fills the river valley, a "high desolate wailing that is the voice of the sorrows of Africa." It is the slaves come down to the Barracoon. Hundreds of them have come, far too many to feed, and they suffer and starve and die and are hidden in the bushes. Through a spy-glass from her verandah, she "sees them living." And suddenly, completely, the horror overwhelms her. Dramatically—in a week—Africa seizes her, and throttles her.

The book has great beauty. It is far less the story of a man and a woman than it is the heart beat of the jungle. It casts its spell like the heavy fragrance of the frangipani blossoms, or the unceasing rhythm of the tom-toms echoing through the forest. One puts it down lingeringly, and only with a wrench, returns to the world he has left.

According to a dispatch to the New York *Times* a German engineer, who prefers to remain anonymous, says he has invented a typewriter which can write up to 1,000 words a minute. The machine is said to attain high speeds by permitting whole words to be printed with one pressure of the finger. The inventor made a study of ordinary business letters and found that fifty per cent of the words used in such letters were the same hundred repeated over and over again. Accordingly he worked on the idea of a machine which would print both words and letters. He found 164 keys were necessary to embody ordinary terms and to provide letters for forming other words. The word-typewriter is understood to be practically perfected and ready for commercial demonstration.

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Books of Special Interest

First Master of Comedy

BRAWNY WYCHERLEY. By WILLARD CONNELY. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1930. $3.

Reviewed by GEORGE HENRY NETTLETON
Yale University

FROM first to last, Mr. Connely's zestful and delightful Restoration biography is unconventional. His title prefers Rochester's unusual adjective "brawny" to the "manly" which from Dryden's day onward has constantly characterized the satire, wit, and strength of Manly Wycherley. Mr. Connely applies his insistent adjective even to Wycherley's "brawny step," thereby perhaps unwittingly linking his Restoration Plain Dealer with Longfellow's Village Blacksmith. The sub-title, characterizing "Brawny Wycherley" as "First Master in English Modern Comedy" disregards the convention which, since Gosse's day, has conceded priority to "Easy Etherege" as the founder of English social comedy. Equally independent is Mr. Connely's designation of his preface as "The Adventure," and of his bibliography as "Reading for Wycherley and His Times."

In this final heading, indeed, lies the key to the author's main intent. In the earlier fashion, his book might have been called "The Life and Times of William Wycherley." It pictures the man and his environment, without much ado about critical controversy over his plays. The chief concern is with the manners that make the man, rather than with those that make Wycherley's comedy of manners. Atmosphere, not analysis, is sought—the re-creation of the times rather than their abstract and brief chronicles. Otherwise, it would be hard to account for the omission from the reading list of such stimulating critics of Wycherley's comedies as John Palmer, Bonamy Dobrée, and Ten Eyck Perry. Book and bibliography are, however, so rich with French references and English documents that minor discrepancies of matter and manner need not here be stressed.

Mr. Connely's style is perhaps his chief distinction. His first chapter opens with the midsummer marriage in 1645 of Julie d'Angennes to the Marquis de Montausier—Julie, "a woman great among men," Montausier "pious, parched, and crotchety," but "a dogged lover" who "could woo a dogged coquette." And presently the coterie of *précieuses* whom Molière was soon to ridicule and the Princess Julie and the poets who taught the youthful Wycherley "the art of chiselling the spoken phrase" become alive and articulate. Then Wycherley, schooled at Angoulême ("Eton with a perruque"), is restored with Charles II to England, tarries briefly at Oxford, and anon lodges in London in the Inner Temple, "wavering between versifying life and codifying statutes." Only a hint or two of Mr. Connely's deft touches of quick characterization can be given—of "Sir Charles Sedley, a dark, chinless little baronet with eyes like Puck and a waterfall of lace between his black ringlets"—of the martial portrait of Barbara Villiers as Bellona, goddess of war ("the Amazons would have given her an immediate brigade")—of Wycherley himself as the baffled scribbler whose "verses reflected his true humility, but also the bruised knuckles of a courageous man"—and of Sedley again as he "dwindled into constancy for the sake of his fair but firm Ann Ayscough."

Mr. Connely's temptation, which luckily does not harden into a besetting sin, is to admit some modern notes that jar the prevailing harmony of Restoration atmosphere. Frances Stewart's look is questionably likened to "the face of a cinema star." And the chapter that tells of the return of William Wycherley, the prodigal son of fifty years, to his father Daniel, closes thus: "Would there be any fatted calf, or would Daniel Wycherley play upon the nerves of his eldest-born with the maddening jabs of a man tuning a piano-forte?" If Mr. Connely's coinage bears sometimes the stamp of a later sovereign than the Merry Monarch, his phrases are at least ready currency to the modern hand.

Mr. Connely is at his best, however, in recapturing the fine flavor of Restoration life and talk. Flavor, too, there is in the later picture of the age of Anne, where Wycherley lingered on, past threescore years and ten, "last column of the peristyle of 'confident young men' that once surrounded King Charles." But the essence of his existence is best caught when, as courtier, wit, and playwright, Wycherley holds the center of the Restoration stage. Through him the colorful Court of Charles II once more resumes its gallant guise when "All, by the King's example, live and love."

The Idol of the Bowery

THE FABULOUS FORREST. By MONTROSE J. MOSES. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1929.

Reviewed by J. RANKEN TOWSE

THE crying need of an additional life of Edwin Forrest, at this late date, was not obvious. Few actors, of any time, have been analyzed, advertised, and reported more meticulously or superfluously. It is not in the least likely that any important revelation, affecting either his personality, character, or achievements could now be made. Of this fact Mr. Montrose Moses, one of the most indefatigable and intelligent of modern theatrical investigators and compilers, is evidently acutely aware. He himself, of course, is far too young to be able to deliver any critical judgment, founded upon individual experience of his subject. But his book is so full a compendium of most of the material evidence and testimony bearing upon his hero and the environment of which he was the product that it will probably interest many readers of recent generations. To these the comprehensive and informative glimpse afforded of the local and national theatrical conditions and social distinctions prevailing in this country in the first half of the nineteenth century may be found both novel and instructive. To older dramatic students the volume will suggest a work of supererogation.

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Why Mr. Moses should have selected the epithet "fabulous" for his title, except for catchpenny intent of which he cannot be suspected, is somewhat puzzling. There is nothing mysterious about Forrest. He is eminently a creature of fact, not fable. The present writer, unluckily, never saw either him or Macready act, but he has talked with scores of competent observers who did, and he saw both of them in the flesh. In appearance, as well as in ideals and training, they were about as distinctive types as could easily be imagined. In their dramatic methods they were equally dissimilar. Essentially they were incomparable. The choice between them, as actors, was largely a matter of taste. Lovers of the traditional, classic, regulated, and somewhat artifical style admired and supported Macready, while they wondered at Forrest and disapproved of his methods—Macready was the more cultivated and artistic of the two, while Forrest was more gifted with the raw material. The latter with his heroic bulk, picturesqueness, rare vocal power, and torrential passions, created overwhelming effects at crucial points, of which the Englishman was utterly incapable. But it is significant that he was the idol of the Bowery and the masses, rather than of the more educated classes. The fact is that he was about the last, and, perhaps, the most able of that robustious, impulsive, and unreflecting style of acting, that long flourished in the transpontine theater of London and is now, happily, practically extinct. As for his patriotic spirit, upon which Mr. Moses lays so much stress, the probability is that both he and Macready were pretty equally convinced of the perfection of their respective nationalities.

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Neither player had much versatility—the supreme test of all real acting power—though the range of Macready was somewhat the wider. Both were intensly egotistical and jealous. The Astor Place tragedy, which Mr. Moses discusses dispassionately and accurately, was the outcome of preliminary misconduct and blundering on all sides. The trouble ought to have been foreseen and prevented. Forrest's blatant spread-eagleism and Macready's somewhat snobbish assumption of racial and artistic superiority, were doubtless responsible for a certain amount of public ill-feeling. Then the mob was allowed to assemble and, as mobs will, get out of hand. The international significance of the episode,—which had been almost forgotten—has been greatly exaggerated.

Aircraftsman Shaw, perhaps better known as Colonel T. E. Lawrence of Arabia, is said to be half-way through his latest literary work—a translation of the Odyssey. It is to be a prose translation.

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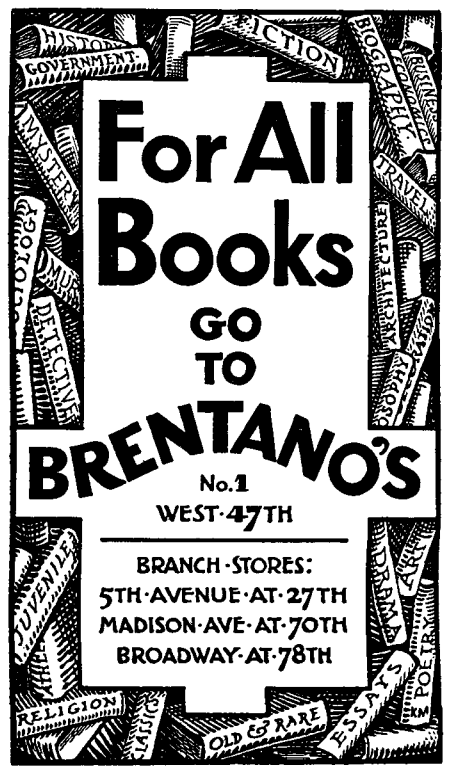

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Books of Special Interest

India in Revolt

INDIA IN BONDAGE. By JABEZ T. SUNDERLAND. New York: Lewis Copeland Co. 1929. $4.

Reviewed by CHARLES BATCHELDER

THE violence of the attacks made in this book upon British rule in India has caused it to be made a penal offense in India to possess it. Rarely has the extreme Indian point of view been expressed so skilfully and convincingly. Burning with the fervor of a crusader, fortified with long study in the country and with considerable reading, the author discusses the civil administration, justice, opium, alcohol, caste, illiteracy, the military situation, Hindu and Mohammedan riots, social evils, and the fitness of the population for self-government in spite of the fact that only seven per cent can read a letter in any language. Instead of ruling India for the benefit of its inhabitants, the British, he tries to prove, are oppressive tyrants, misruling the country, overtaxing it, and squeezing huge sums out of the starving masses, to be poured into the swollen coffers of the British government in England and of the British merchants. His best chapters deal with the theoretical right of all peoples to govern themselves, and in them he makes impassioned appeals to the political principles which underly the American constitution. Dr. Sunderland is evidently sincere and convinced of the righteousness of the cause he so ably pleads. He has apparently omitted none of the accusations which could be brought against British rule, and has devoted considerable space to abuses which took place under the British East India Company long before the direct administration of the British Government, and which have been corrected for more than seventy years.

As the volume is admittedly that of a leading advocate of Indian Nationalism, it is not to be expected that it should be impartial, or that the arguments on the other side should be presented. It is, however, to be regretted that there are so many errors in matters, not of opinion, but of well-known facts. "India produces more opium than any other country in the world," is the first sentence in the chapter, "India's Opium Curse," which is one of the most telling. It is, of course, perfectly well established that China produces many times as much. Dr. Sunderland admits that reductions are being made in exports to other countries, but inquires, "Why is India itself discriminated against? Why is not the same reduction to be made yearly in the quantity of opium to be sold at home?" He is apparently unaware that in 1916 the area under poppy cultivation was 204,186 acres and in 1928 only 48,083 acres, a reduction of more than seventy-six per cent. The government of India is making great exertions to decrease production, while the control of the opium traffic in British India is entirely left to the provincial governments, where the Indian ministers are responsible to the provincial legislatures. Public sentiment clearly does not support the prohibition of the use of opium, which is generally employed as a medicine. An analysis of the facts removes the basis for the chapter. There is a similar situation regarding alcohol, which is not widely used by Hindus and is prohibited by the Mohammedan religion. The difficulties regarding the enforcement of prohibition in the United States have not encouraged other countries to undertake similar experiments.

The method employed is to make assertions, without adducing proof, but often supported by quotations from various authors, and to build up a case, which falls when the premise is disproved, as in the instance of opium. Statistics and economics are generally omitted or obsolete. British rule is held responsible for the poverty due to overpopulation, made possible by the British prevention of war, pestilence, and general famines. Practically no credit is given for any of the outstanding British achievements to improve conditions, like the Government irrigation works, which supply over thirteen per cent of the entire crop area. Soon over 5,000,000 acres more will be fertilized by the Sukkur Barrage, which is one of many similar projects.

It is difficult to believe that a British army of 66,602, even with the assistance of an Indian army of 162,896, is adequate to enable an Indian civil service of about 1,500 to rule tyrannically a nation of 318,942,480, many of whom are first-class fighting men. British rule in India would clearly be quite impossible if the masses were not fairly well satisfied with it.

The book does represent extremely well the aspirations of a very small number of Indians, largely foreign educated, many of whom are influenced by Bolshevism or Socialism, but who have no administrative experience, and do not realize the difficulties of giving democratic self-government to a backward and illiterate population. The masses have no understanding of these ideals and are apathetic when not roused by agitators who play on their emotions and passions. The 68,735,000 Mohammedans and the 70,000,000 "depressed classes" have protested frequently against any extension of autonomy without communal representation to protect them against oppression by a Hindu majority. The statements in the book are diametrically opposite to the resolutions passed by Moslem and Outcaste congresses.

The value of the volume is much impaired for the intelligent reader by the unreliability of many of the assertions upon which the whole argument is based, and this inspires a general distrust, even in regard to the errors of policy from which no government can be entirely free. It is probable that the author accepted without critical confirmation assertions so recklessly made by the Indian Nationalists, many of which are unfounded or misrepresent the situation. It may be that British salaries and pensions are too high, but it is unwise to estimate them at $100,000,000 a year when the pensions are only $11,000,000 and the salaries a fraction of that sum. The much discussed "drain" of wealth from India to England resolves itself into exchanges of goods in international trade to the benefit of all parties. The pitiless test of cold facts punctures most of the claims against British rule. It would have been much wiser to have remained on the safe platform of emotions and opinions instead of venturing into the dangerous domain of statistics, where disproof is not difficult.

The case against British rule would be much more effective if it were temperately presented, and supported with reliable statistics. After all, the issue is whether the British Parliament is willing to rule India against the opposition of large numbers of educated Indians. Prime Minister MacDonald has committed himself in various books and articles to "Dominion Status" for India, and the recent Indian Congress voted for immediate independence. There are very few who would advocate the retention of India by military force, so the question is really one of time and methods, and not of principle.

Hospital War

ORDERLY! By M. R. WERNER. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1930. $2.50.

Reviewed by MARY LEE
Author of "It's a Great War"

THIS little book is not, as its title might imply, fiction. It is a well-told and accurate account of some of its author's experiences during twenty months as an enlisted man in an American Base Hospital Unit during the war. Not pleasant reading, because there was no work in the war more humiliating, sickening, utterly disheartening than that of an orderly with a Base Hospital. His life was one continual round of tending bed-pans and urinals, of lifting maimed bodies, of scrubbing floors. The job is one of those beastly positions which nobody realizes can exist before they enlist, and in which men continue after enlistment only because there is no way to get out.

Mr. Werner's unit, which is evidently U. S. Base Hospital No. 2, the Presbyterian Hospital Unit, was one of those amphibious organizations which, although American, was attached to the British Expeditionary Forces, and was therefore bound up with British rather than American red tape. The hospital took on something of an international flavor from its service with British Number I General Hospital at Etretat. Its experience lacks something of the carefree joyousness of similar organizations in the A.E.F. which arrived in France and amused themselves to the full in some back area long before anything was doing with the American angle of the war. Mr. Werner's hospital was plunged immediately head over heels into caring for huge convoys of desperately wounded from the British front. There were, too, the intricacy of British rules and regulations to be mastered, and the peculiarities of British rank.

One superb example Mr. Werner gives of that strange contact of America, young and carefree, with Britain, old and bound by rules. A British Major General was being carried on a stretcher, red-tabbed, beribboned. "Where'll we put this bird?" sang out the Texan stretcher bearer. The General sat up on his stretcher. "What did he call me?" he asked his servant. "Bird, Sir—bird, Sir—bird, Sir," answered the Tommy, drawing himself up and saluting with perfect regulation rigidity before each answer. It was too much for even the General, and he laughed.

The book is written with humor, but it is the humor of middle age, not the humor of the expeditionary force. You have to go back to "Dere Mable" to find that bubbling humor that regaled those young people of twelve years ago. It is gone from them now, vanished as completely as the humor and the idealism of sophomore year. "Orderly!" does not, indeed, attempt to make you live the war. It merely tells you what happened to one of those young people long ago, as any other history book might tell it. One suspects that Mr. Werner felt that with everyone who could write, and many who couldn't, writing war books, he had better shoot one at the up curve of the market, and that he thereupon set down what he could remember of the great war. One feels that Barnum and William Jennings Bryan and Brigham Young are more important people to him still than Private First Class Werner, of the A.E.F.

Like all war books written by men, much is said of war's physical damage to human bodies, and little of its spiritual damage to human souls. The sound of the surgeon's saw as it clurrs through the humerus is described accurately. But, after all, this sound is the same in any civilian operating room,—go to Bellevue and you can hear it there to-morrow. For automobiles maim men in peace times, as guns maimed them in war. Perhaps it is because men don't see the physical suffering of the race except in war that that side of it seems to make such an impression on them. Whereas they take right in their stride that strange change of morale in the human spirit that war conditions seem to bring about. Mr. Werner sums it up in one neat paragraph, under the heading "recreations."

> Other recreations (he says), were not so simple (as getting pleasantly drunk and wandering home by moonlight). Some of the men fell in love with nurses, and some of them fell in love with each other. There were marriages, abortions, and hasty departures. . . . To-day in Normandy there are long-legged Anglo-French, and Franco-American children who resemble strangely some of the men I used to know. If one of our men was about to become a father, and the girl was one of the French girls of the town, he was usually transferred hurriedly to some other unit. . . . The nurses usually knew more about science than the women of the town. The men who fell in love with each other did not have these complications, but they had other difficulties. . . .

Mr. Werner's book ought to go well in England. For if you write a book and mention the American Army, you must also mention the British. If you mention American nurses, or other women war workers, you must also be "conscious" of the British women. That is a prime requisite of British book reviewers. Mr. Werner does this. His yarns of British officers and soldiers are uncensored, and he is also "conscious" of the WAAC's. In fact he explains them neatly in a footnote: "Members of the Women's Aid Auxiliary Corps sent out by the British to do clerical work at the base towns, and of great service as the sexual companions of the British Expeditionary Forces." Or, *would* it go well in England? Here is a quotation which goes a long way to explain the present squeamishness of the British about American war books,—typically British, typically military, it is a letter from the War Office at London to the Commanding Officer of the American Base Hospital: "Sir," it says, "I am commanded by the Army Council to acquaint you that it has been found desirable to include a number of ladies in the Staff of the War Office Casualty Branch. . . . I am to ask, therefore, whether you would be good enough to give instructions that the following abbreviations should in future be used: V.D.G. for gonorrhea and V.D.S. for syphilis." The British gentlemen at the War Office could then go on pretending that war was a pure and glorious adventure, the "ladies" would still be fooled, and both could feign politely that the initials which came through their hands in such appalling numbers each day stood for nothing at all that any well brought up lady or gentleman could understand! If men and women of the war generation would not face the ugliness of war in England, how can we expect that their descendants will face it now?

Magda Vamos, who has translated from the Hungarian a recently published biography entitled "Il Duce: the Life and Work of Benito Mussolini," is a young Czecho-Slovakian journalist. She speaks seven languages and has been the accredited representative of a leading Hungarian paper at meetings of the League of Nations.

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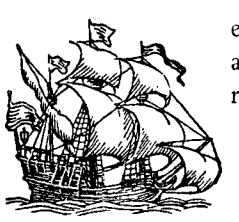

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Some Recent Fiction

An Unadjusted Heroine

THIS IS MY BODY. By MARGERY LATIMER. New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith. 1930. $2.50.

NOW and then one comes upon a book whose aim is so lofty that it seems unjust to call it a failure, ranking it below all the storybooks that succeed in being pleasant pastime, and yet whose execution falls so far short of its aim that there is nothing else to do. "This Is My Body" is such a book.

It is the story of a sensitive and intense girl, who is possessed of some devil that makes her fight furiously every one and every place she meets, and wound herself most bitterly of all. She cannot live with her parents, nor without them; she lies awake at night dreaming of the friendship of the girls at college, and never speaks to them without the most offensive rudeness; her lover she loves and hates, and cannot live without him. Among all her tormenting, self-thwarted desires, the two strongest are to be herself and to get at reality.

Megan so far is recognizable; almost every one must start with some fellow-feeling for her: but she exhausts one's sympathy and exceeds one's patience a hundred times over in the course of the book. The essential trouble is that she never makes any reasoned effort to understand herself or the world in which she is placed. With an insane egotism she expects people to bring her admiration and love, and will never herself advance a step toward any one, speak a word to make herself intelligible, learn a syllable of the human language. She has not accepted the universe, and, as Carlyle said of another lady, who had, "Gad, she'd better!" All that Megan calls compromise, and scorns; but there is a compromise that is cowardice and a compromise that is courtesy, and Megan is among other things consistently ill-mannered. Again, she will not even try to understand what she wants and means. She talks of reality until she seems to be hypnotized by the word; but what does she mean by it? She has the normal experiences of a college girl; she reads philosophy; she knows besides real hungry poverty and passionate love. Yet she never says reasonably "I think Plato, or Christ, or Einstein is getting at what I mean by reality" or "I come closest to what I call reality in suffering, or in my lover's arms," or "I think my mother at home knows something of what I want to learn"; she does not try to follow such a lead: she goes about asking for reality from everybody she meets, as if some one could give it to her like the binomial theorem.

This is not in itself why "This Is My Body" is a failure; Megan is no more trying than many ladies in tragedy and romance. Indeed, she comes near to Aristotle's requirements for a protagonist; she has much that is fine and much that is universal, spoiled by her weaknesses; she wants only one thing. If ever she said instinctively "There but for the grace of God stand I," Megan would be a great tragic character. But she is simply incomprehensible; one asks "*Why* does she do that?" in despair of knowing the answer. *Corruptio optimi pessima*; the better the book might have been, the worse it is. But one hopes for more from Miss Latimer's sensitive observation and emotional keenness, though her arrow falls short of the moon, than from the archers who hit the nearest bush.

Clapper Tongues

THE WEATHERHOUSE. By NAN SHEPHERD. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1930. $2.50.

HERE is a novel that is to-day an unfamiliar tale; the world which it so generously portrays is unknown to those who dwell saturated in the life of cities; it is a fantastic tale, made real only by the clapper of tongues in the Scots dialect; reminiscent of the world in which Robert Burns lived. Indeed, the yarns which incited his ballads are brought into immediate recollection by old Lang Leeb, who throughout the tale sings snatches of old ballads, winding them in and out of the conversation like a daisy chain, though not merely for the pleasure of them, but to dart some hard, penetrating shaft at a gossiper.

Only women lived in "The Weatherhouse," six of them, and Ellen alone had married, but her husband deserted her soon afterwards, leaving her with Kate, now in her forties, the youngest of them; all dour, kirk-going women, excited only by their family life and village gossip, seemingly unaware of the world beyond. The arrival of their niece Lindsey was of greater importance than the war, now in its third year. This, however, was Lindsey's main concern, for Garry was in France, and she waited eagerly to be married to him. But Garry was the nephew of mad Miss Barbara, who still at the age of sixty would whirl herself into a frenzied highland fling, and regarded the war as a personal affront to her clan's liberty, for "fient a thing does the war do that I can see but provide you tramps to tramp the road." Therefore, the marriage was strongly opposed, but Garry and Lindsey are of the same Scotch blood, and deeply in love with each other; therefore, inevitably, yet another generation insists upon acceptance.

However, Lindsey and Garry are only threads in this incohesive story; balladry, day-dreaming, and above all the romantic gossipings of all the old men and women are of the first significance. "For good, reminiscent talk was the salt of the earth" to them. Each of them was eager to spill out some fantastic yarn, based always on some remote event, and overshadowing them all are the wild and rugged exploits of nature.

Through the very richness of her material Miss Shepherd fails to make "The Weatherhouse" a first-class novel, for one tale overlaps the other, and cordial talk and the singing of ballads is uppermost.

Faith and Peace

THE SHIP OF TRUTH. By LETTICE ULPHA COOPER. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1930. $2.50.

Reviewed by K. GWENDA DAVID

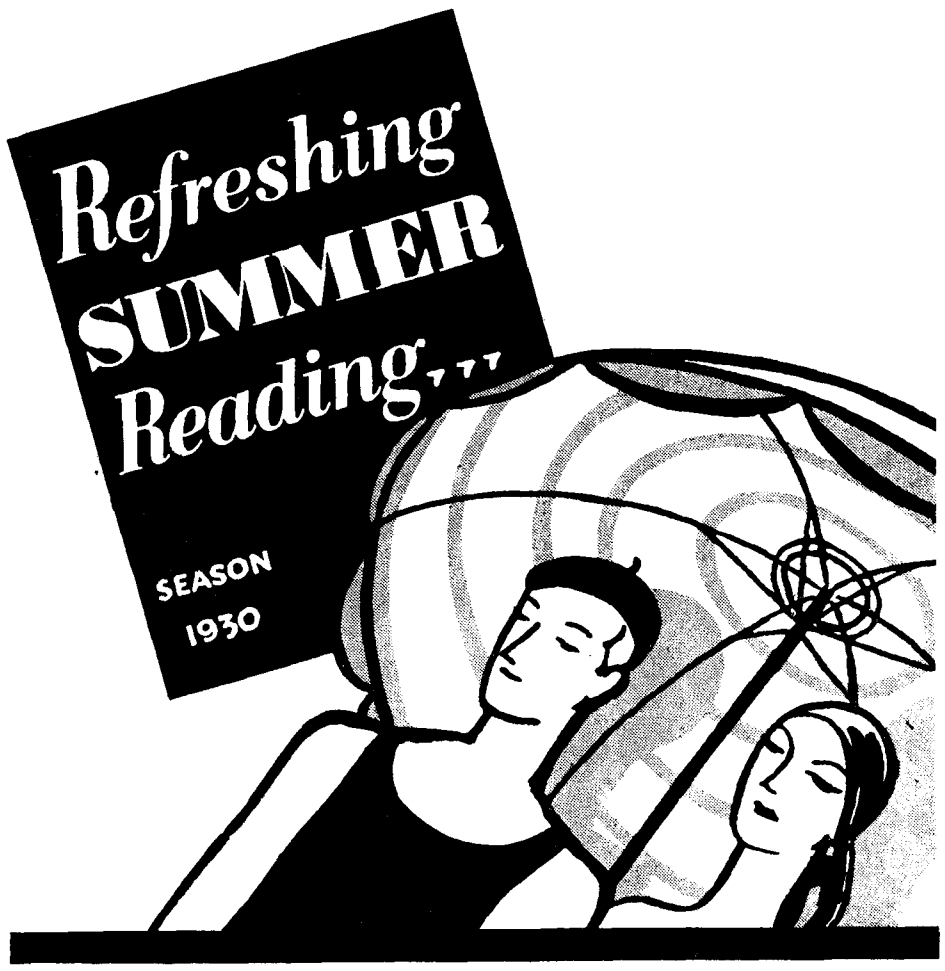
IN the midst of all the controversial discussions on religious matters, the English publishers, Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, offered a thousand-pound prize for the best religious novel. Prize novels have rarely proved to be works of art. They are limited by the subject-matter for which the prize is awarded, and also by the standard of the manuscripts received. Miss Lettice Cooper's "The Ship of Truth," which gained the prize, does not prove to be an exception. It certainly provokes both keen interest and varied discussion, but although there is no definition as to the material used for a novel, "The Ship of Truth" recalls at once the protracted essay of the eighteenth century, in which there is little action, but a deal of lengthy speeches and details which are so true to life that they gradually pall.

The tale is the chronicle of Clement Dyson, an Anglo-Catholic clergyman in the West Riding of Yorkshire, who gradually loses faith in the infallibity of the Church, and feels that he can no longer honestly give the Sacrament, and who therefore resigns his office and determines to find any work which will keep his wife and two children in the comfort to which they are accustomed.

He leaves his family with his mother-in-law, and goes to London expecting to find a job immediately, but very soon he learns that men will not so easily accept him; they are suspicious of an "ex-vicar," and as his monetary resources lessen, so does his former faith in God's omnipotence. This loneliness terrifies him; he becomes desperate in his search for a job, and, in the awareness that there is no survival in after life, feels that there is no hope.

Finally, unable to bear his disbelief, he has a nervous breakdown, which saves him from insanity; then he returns to Yorkshire again, where, working as a stone-breaker in a lime quarry, he gradually retrieves his mental equilibrium and learns that "religion is a voyage of discovery. Some people band themselves together to go on the voyage and some go alone. The Church or any other religion is only a ship to take you there, and everyone must choose their own way of going." With this realization he is happy again and, believing, is prepared once more to enter the Church.

It is a great pity that, although there are innumerable introspective soliloquies, the reader is never given an insight as to the real impetus for Clement's belief or disbelief; the resulting anguish is related, but as for its reasons, which would have been of the utmost interest, these are hardly indicated. Again the attempt at the end to introduce a mystic element into the reinstatement of belief verges on the sentimental. Yet the book is well-written, without religious bias, and cerainly it stimulates both conjecture and discussion.



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DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

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A London Letter

By J. B. Priestley

FOR the last few days, poetry has been news and the poets have been in the newspapers. This unusual state of affairs was the result of Bridges's death, and the subsequent vacancy of the Laureateship. Most of us were asked—by way of the telephone, and generally at meal times—whether we were in favor of the office being abolished or not, and, if not, whether we thought it should be given simply as a mark of distinction or should have duties attached to it, and, lastly, who was the man for the post. For my part, I was all in favor of there being a Poet Laureate, but I held that at this late date it was imposible to turn him into an official or court poet, and that the office should simply be a mark of distinction. Bridges himself held it in this spirit, and now and again, especially during the war, he was attacked by the "stunt press" for not producing any official patriotic verses. He took not the slightest notice of these attacks. (Bridges took no notice of anybody; he was a tremendous character.) I am rather surprised, by the way, that Bridges accepted the commutation of the butt of Canary into a miserable £27 per annum. If I were Laureate, I should insist upon having the wine, which I understand would be worth about £125 nowadays. It was, I believe, the wretched Pye who first agreed to acept the £27. The butt of Canary would have improved his verse.

Now the official announcement of the appointment of John Masefield has been made. It is not a bad appointment. If sheer popularity had been the criterion, Kipling was the man, but I gather that he did not want it. Our most distinguished living poet is undoubtedly Yeats, and he was most frequently named for the office. But it is difficult to imagine Yeats as Poet Laureate, simply because he is so completely identified with Ireland. If a dignified official poet had been wanted, Binyon would have been an excellent choice. De la Mare was put forward, too, but he is difficult to imagine as Poet Laureate. Oddly enough, I heard no suggestion that A. E. Housman should have the office. He would not have accepted it, of course, but nevertheless, if sheer distinction and literary influence have anything to do with the matter, no living English poet had a better claim to be asked. The extent of Housman's influence on younger poets, from the late 'nineties onward, cannot be estimated, but it is certainly colossal. That Shropshire lad pops up all over the place. He contrived to be magnificently "post-war" twenty years before the war arrived.

Masefield at his best is a good poet, and he is, of course, very English. (His "Reynard the Fox" is a genuine slice of this island.) Perhaps his very best work has been done during these last twelve years, yet when I think of him, my mind returns to the years before the war, when I was in my 'teens and his long narrative poems, such as "The Daffodil Fields," were coming out in the *English Review* and creating a sensation. Is this an illusion? Am I right in thinking that those poems of his *did* create a sensation and sell out the *English Review* on its day of publication, and that there are no such poetical sensations now? I believe I am right, and that when all allowance has been made for the excitement of enthusiastic early youth and all the tricks of memory, there was a marked difference between the general attitude towards poetry then and now. This recent and pathetically brief little fuss about poets and poetry has only thrown into relief the strange apathy of this new age. Just before the war, a great many good poets, de la Mare, Hodgson, Rupert Brooke, Squire, and the rest, came along and began to claim our attention. Then, during the war years, poetry boomed. It was perhaps a false boom, depending on the fact that if you were an educated civilian you could hardly, in decency, refuse to read the sonnets of young soldiers who might at any moment be blown to pieces. This boom was followed by a slump, and we are still in it. I do not believe there has been a time during the last three hundred years when English people cared less about poetry than they do to-day. Remember, we are a poetical race. The educated Englishman has always been a potential poet. The astonishing quality and quantity of English poetry does not represent a wild miracle. English poetry has come from the life of the English people. But lately, something queer has happened here. The woods are still thick with primroses and violets, and glorious on June nights with the voices of the nightingales, but the poets are silent, or, if not silent, then not given a hearing.

How often nowadays do we see a book of verse reviewed at length and with excitement, turned into the book of the week, the month, the season? How often do we hear educated readers discussing new poets and poetry? How many new reputations *in poetry have been made during these last* few years? The youngsters at Oxford and Cambridge who, at any other time, would have been producing books of verse, are now trying their hand at fiction or biography. What has happened? My own explanation, for what it is worth, is that the mood of the time is not favorable to poetry, which thrives either on certainties, a delighted acceptance of life, or on a tempestuous rush of emotion, wild rebellion. We get neither to-day. In their place, we have a critical and sceptical intelligence, with its accompanying host of doubts, hesitations, and morbidities. It is far easier to turn this mental stuff into fiction of a certain kind, into cleverish satirical works, ironical biographies and histories, and the like, than to turn it into poetry. Mr. Harold Munro, in the introduction to his recent anthology of modern verse, has told us that the greatest poetical influence here is now that of T. S. Eliot. I have no doubt he is right. T. S. Eliot is a poet of terrific modernity, and he has always seemed to me to be running a desperate obstacle race to the top of Parnassus. His verse, and that of his followers, is certainly of our own age, but I for one—and here I believe I speak for a great many by no means unintelligent English readers—do not care for his kind of poetry. It gives me no satisfaction, just as most of the queer music written just after the war gives me no satisfaction, and so I do not bother my head about it; I turn to other forms of literature. And that, I believe, is what most English readers feel. "So this is poetry now, is it?" they cry. "Well, I don't think I want it." And they try something else. Thus, the groves are silent and deserted, and in the market place of honest prose, there are cheering crowds.

One of the pleasantest and most successful of the new books is the work of an American who has long made his home in England. This is the Diary of R. D. Blumenfeld, editor of the *Daily Express*, who came here originally, in the late 'eighties, as London correspondent of the *New York Herald*. It is one of the best social history books of the last few years, and it makes enchanting reading. You can watch the whole world changing in its easy pages.

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Charles Scribner's Sons, New York

Ægean Art

L'ART ÉGÉEN. By Jean Charbonneaux. Paris: G. Van Oest. 1929.

MR. CHARBONNEAUX, who has distinguished himself by excavations at Mallia on the island of Crete, has in this book, added one more volume to the "Bibliothèque d'Histoire de l'Art." This brief sketch of Ægean art does not pretend to originality, but is merely a restatement of more specialized archæological reports. After a short introduction in which the various Minoan, Cycladic, and Helladic periods are mysteriously equated chronologically, the author gives a fairly adequate picture of the palace architecture of the Ægean world, but takes no cognizance of the more simple domestic abodes, especially those of the mainland, which are as interesting as they are characteristic. A fuller and rather better chapter on sculpture, treated, however, from a purely Cretan point of view, leads up to Chapter III on painting—that amazing Ægean art in which "*l'irréel se mêle au réel en un délicate accord propice au délassement et au rêve.*" The last chapter on Applied Arts devotes most space to pottery, where again Cretan ware is well elaborated, while the mainland fabrics are hardly given the courtesy of recognition.

In general the book is decidedly unbalanced, and the fears of the author that he is "*un peu injuste pour tout ce qui ne fut pas minoen dans l'Égée préhellénique*" are well grounded. The sixty-four plates at the end of the book, though not so judiciously selected as one would have wished, are decidedly a redeeming feature. But here again Crete outdistances all other lands with a majority of over two-thirds the total number of plates; and of the twenty-eight vases reproduced, excepting the neolithic ware from Thessaly, the Greek mainland is honored with but three! For any one to whom prehellenic Ægean art is a closed book, "L'Art Égéen" will at least succinctly present the problem. For the specialist it is negligible.

Norway's Great Man

KNUT HAMSUN. Sein Leben und Sein Werk. Von John Lindquist. Autorisierte Uebertragung aus dem Schwedischen von Heinrich Goebel. Tübingen: Alexander Fischer Verlag. 1929. $2.25.

KNUT HAMSUN. Das Unbändige Ich und die Menschliche Gemeinschaft. Von Walter Berendson. München: Albert Langen. 1929. $2.50.

KNUT HAMSUN. Af Einar Skavlan. Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag. 1929. $4.

Reviewed by Allen W. Porterfield

KNUT HAMSUN is the last of Norway's mighty line; for Ibsen and Bjoernson are dead, and so are Lie, Kielland, and Garborg; Wergeland died a long while ago, and Holberg moved over to Denmark early in the eighteenth century; Johan Bojer's works might just as well have been written in France, and Sigrid Undset is a woman.

Now, the Scandinavians have long been accustomed to having their gods; they had in truth at the very beginning of their national existence the most complete set that ever edified a people or worried students. Odin, Thor, Freya, Loge Loki, Baldur, *et al*—these are names that have written themselves indelibly into the Northern way of living and writing. Is it possible that these books about Hamsun are merely contemporary proofs that the Northerner must have his god? Or is Knut Hamsun really a great man?

He is a great man, so great in truth that if the Norwegians wish to deify him they may. Everyone of his works, except the "Queen of Tamara," plays at home. He personally has abandoned Norway on a number of occasions; but when he wishes to write he returns, and locates his action in the North. Berendson regards him as "the greatest story-teller the North has ever produced." This may be a strained superlative, but the fact remains that people read him, critics discuss him, biographers do their best by him, other authors envy him, academies crown him, and by 1918 he had been translated into twenty-three different languages, thus outdoing Hans Christian Andersen by one.

Nor can it be said that his popularity is chiefly due to the fact that he is the greatest foe of the machine that ever put pen to paper. His whole message does seem to be: Beware, oh ye children of men, lest the wheels on which you are constantly going some place take you past Nature rather than to her. He says himself of himself: "In a hundred years I shall be forgotten." He seems to forget that other men have said the same, and yet we remember them. These three biographies, then, are not written merely because Norway must have a god; nor are they written merely because Knut Hamsun chanced to have been born on August 4, 1859. They are written, rather, because with each succeeding catalogue of Gyldendals in Oslo Hamsun announces a new work with a new idea.

Of the three biographies before us, Landquist's, though the smallest, is the most helpful, particularly if you be somewhat scholarly inclined and short on time. Landquist devotes the first thirty-nine pages to Hamsun's life, and then discusses his writings under such headings as the romanticist, the aristocrat, the champion of the people, *et cætera*. Were Hamsun to see these captions, they would fill him with ire. He loathes labels; but he never reads what anybody says about him, so there is no danger of his wrath being stirred.

Appended to Landquist's study is a list of the pivotal dates in Hamsun's life, and a chronological catalogue of his finished works.

For the scholar who has time, Berendson's is the best of these three books. He has done a great deal of pioneer investigation: he has collected Hamsun's earlier works, some of which have never been printed, while others, though published, had been totally forgotten by Hamsun himself. He straightens out Hamsun's complicated family relations for the first time, although he, too, is in spots most laconic. Of Hamsun's first wife, he merely tells us that he divorced her in 1906. His second, or present, wife, born and reared on a farm, had from girlhood a passion for the stage, where she eventually achieved some distinction, playing, among others, Hamsun rôles. The wordy sub-title of the book gives a clue to the method—it is the German method.

Skavlan's book is big and beautiful. The whole of Hamsun, the man and the poet, is here, down to January 1, 1928. The illustrations are as captivating as any that ever illustrated a biography published in this country. Unfortunately, they are taken and made especially for this book and are heavily copyrighted. Reproduce them and you go to jail, or pay so much that jail would be preferable.

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Art

CLAUDE MONET, THE WATER LILIES. By GEORGES CLEMENCEAU. Doubleday, Doran. 1930. $3.

It is the besetting fallacy of all art criticism that a true analysis of any work of art must be also a true account of the mind of its creator, and perhaps the broadest value of Clemenceau's tribute of friendship to Monet is to destroy the critical figment of a doctrinaire in optics and technique, substituting therefor the truer idea of a heroic lyrical poet. Indeed militancy is more characteristic of Monet than reflection or research. Clemenceau gives the unforgettable picture of four easels set up before the poplar-rimmed poppy field, and the painter leaping from one to the other ready with the saber stroke as the lights and shadows passed.

This is the characteristic revelation. There are more pathetic modulations. Monet slashing some of his best canvases in despair, completing the Lily Pools in half blindness, giving them to the nation, but dreading and refusing to exhibit them until he should be gone.

On the general matter of Monet's color vision, Clemenceau sees, correctly we think, a parallelism with, rather than a derivative from, contemporary science. Unquestionably the discoveries of Rood and Chevreul were in the air, but they were applied by Monet executively in the daily attempt to make paint coruscate like light, rather than reflectively and analytically.

Clemenceau analyzes the Cathedrals and the Lily Pools, thus taking the technique at its most radical and most urbane points. The larger questions whether the coruscation reveals nature or only produces a sort of mirage, the author does not argue, though it is fundamental. He doubts all static and mental visions, and expects only the intimations vouchsafed by a world in flux and dissolved in ever changing light. He writes: "Thus Monet painted action, the action of the universe struggling with itself, to produce itself and continue itself through series of momentary views caught in the reflecting surfaces of his lily ponds."

In a book of friendship, an eloquent and feeling book, any attempt to classify the work of the poet friend in the light of history would have been in the worst of taste. There is a temptation to make such an appraisal in the light of the fuller and more intimate knowledge which this book affords of Monet the sun worshipper. Whoever attempts the appraisal will do well to bear in mind this epigram of Clemenceau's: "What quantities of ignorance, misknowledge, and knowledge, are needed to build up an 'authoritative' judgment!"

CONTEMPORARY ART APPLIED TO THE STORE AND ITS DISPLAY. By *Frederick Kiesler.* Brentanos.

A PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN LIBRARY. By *A. Monroe Aurand, Jr.* Harrisburg: Aurand Press.

MATISSE. Rudge.

PICASSO. Rudge.

ABSTRACT DESIGN. By *Amos Fenn.* Scribners. $4.50.

PRACTICAL LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN OILS. By *E. G. Lutz.* Scribners. $2.

GENUINE AND COUNTERFEIT. By *Max J. Friedlander.* A. & C. Boni. 1930. $1.75.

BEAUTY, AN INTERPRETATION OF ART AND IMAGANATIVE LIFE. By *Helen Huss Parkhurst.* Harcourt, Brace. 1930. $4.50.

FAMOUS SPORTING PRINTS. VI. Boxing. 1930. New York: William Edwin Rudge. $2.25.

FAMOUS WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS. VII. *J. S. Sargent.* Introduction by *Martin Hardie.* New York: William Edwin Rudge. $2.25.

KENNETH HAYES MILLER. By *Lloyd Goodrich.* New York: The Arts Pub. Co.

Biography

DWIGHT WHITNEY MORROW. By HEWITT H. HOWLAND. Century. 1930. $1.50.

This is an ideal biography of a living statesman. It contains the essential facts of the record. It includes sufficient appraisements of Morrow's character at various stages in his career to enable us to judge the impressions of his fellow workers. The story is woven together simply, clearly, and readably. And above all, the author does not permit himself a single word of "blah."

Those who know Dwight Morrow would testify that he has no interest whatever in fulsome adulation. Those who know Hewitt Howland would testify that he would find no joy in a task which required that kind of writing. The biographer and the biographee are thus closely attuned, with the result that we get a straightforward, forthright story of a straightforward, forthright man.

The one possible criticism of this little book as a picture of Dwight Morrow probably finds its explanation in this temperamental attunement between the subject and the author. The high qualities of Morrow's character are appropriately mentioned. But what seems to this reviewer the outstanding quality of the Morrow make-up is not sufficiently stressed. It is the overpowering mental sincerity of the man. This seems to be the secret of his ability to win cookies from the angry old lady, to terminate amicably a litigation between the heirs of a great estate, and to bring Calles to a breakfast of ham and eggs.

More voluminous and more effusive biographies of Morrow will be written, but this literary cameo of Hewitt Howland's will hold its own with more imposing monuments to Morrow's labors.

Fiction

DESTINIES. By FRANÇOIS MAURIAC. Translated by ERIC SUTTON. Covici, Friede. 1929. $2.50.

The maturity and charm of Continental fiction are admirably exemplified by this fragile little tale of a young Frenchman whose face was his misfortune.

"Destinies" is projected against the countryside of the Landes, near Bordeaux, in the late summer. Over it broods an atmosphere of ripening grapes, dust, fierce heat, and midsummer calm. It is the story of Bob Lagave, the son of Augustin Lagave, who, having gone into the French Ministry of Finance, has made a religion of public service. The son, adventurously inclined, finds the parental roof a trifle cramped, and seeks indulgence for his inclinations in Paris. A career of gaiety there ends in his death in an automobile accident.

For all its frustration and finality, "Destinies" is not a tragic or a futile work. It is suffused with serenity and wisdom, with that fulfilment of life and acceptance of death, which is the secret of Latin civilization. François Mauriac writes with grace; the translation is adequate; the book itself is an admirable example of the maturity and vitality of Gallic literature.

SPIDER WEB. By MARJORIE WORTHINGTON. Cape & Smith. 1930. $2.50.

The *milieu* of Mt. Morris Park, New York, in the 'nineties, makes fresh new material for a novel. As also does the colossal Hedwig Mendelsohn, tyrant of the wholesale millinery trade, and her weak family, far less sure of themselves than she was, and hiding their confusion behind ostentation—a family of sons and daughters with ambitions dissipated, insecure, and high-strung in the marbled elegance of their West End Avenue apartment. The story itself is dreary—a tale of unlovely people, mean and jealous, without taste and without scruples, a family whose cult is the protection and care of one another, however bitter their mutual dislike and distrust. They do their duty, complaining and whining, but they do it to the end, their unhappy small lives ever bearing the mark of domestic cruelty and oppression.

The one delicate note in all this ugliness is the undersized little Russian who timidly wanders into the web, marries in it, and remains there. A lover of music, sensitive, honorable, he finds himself obliged to make compromise after compromise, until he emerges just one more of the innumerable indistinguishable manufacturers who step out of their downtown loft buildings into their limousines, whose daughters and wives spend their afternoons playing poker, whose home is bickering and nagging and a constant striving to outdo some other manufacturer's family. Usually in fiction, such a figure is comic. In this book it is tragic. That he rises above his fate in one gallant gesture at the end, does not save the misery of a tawdry, misspent life.

The novel is written without much drama of incident. It is a series of life stories monotonously related without humor and without sympathy. Its various backgrounds are probably its most interesting contribution.

STORM BIRD. By MOLLIE PANTER-DOWNES. Putnams. 1930. $2.50.

Here is a story which captures the interest quickly, and is as quickly forgotten—a story of people vivid to the eye, living in fashionable London, carried around in a melodramatic cycle of events back to the point where the author originally picked them up. It is a rather cheap story of sex urges and frustrations. The best characterization is the Storm Bird herself, not by nature a tempestuous creature, but the unconscious cause of a family simoon—an easy-going girl, simple enough to be a pawn, who is lifted unwisely out of an artist's Bohemia into conventional life, and who, finding herself hopelessly enmeshed in the affairs and jealousies that surround her there, steps out of the picture and back once more to her former lover.

The story is over-written, figures, adjectives, adverbs, make pictures that catch the eye but impede the narrative. Costumes are couturier's creations, sets are worthy of an interior decorator. The plot is too patterned and the details too selected, to give the illusion of reality. Yet it remains light entertainment.

THE WEEK-END LIBRARY. Issue of 1930. Doubleday, Doran. 1930. $2.50.

THE YEARS THAT TAKE THE BEST AWAY. By *Barbara Noble.* Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.

(*Continued on page* 1077)

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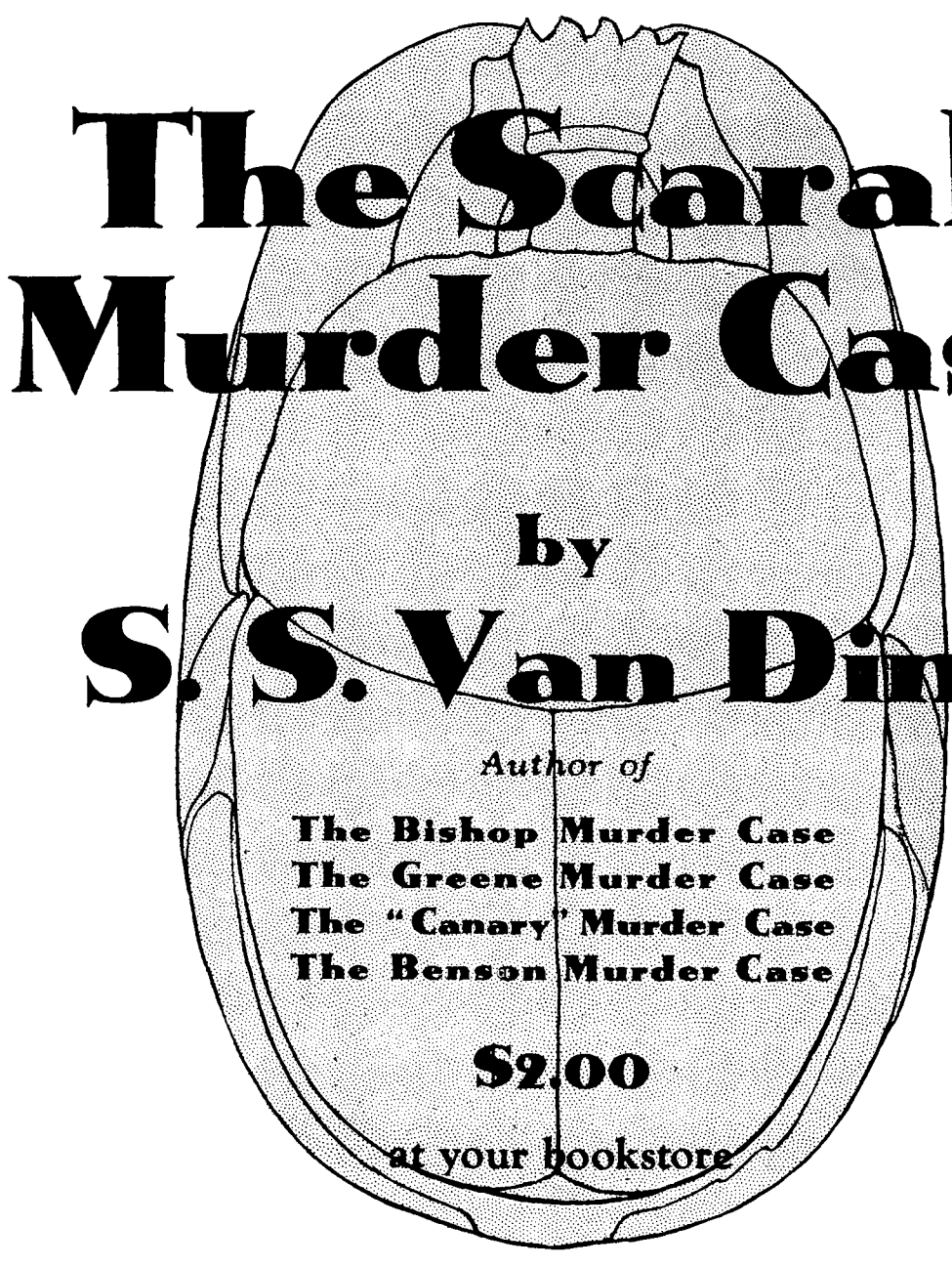
the new Philo Vance story



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Points of View

A California Problem

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

In a review in the *Saturday Review of Literature* of April 26 Professor Lionel Stevenson, writing of the work of Ina Coolbrith, the Californian poet, makes a statement which holds interest, at least, for readers living in the extreme West. He says of Miss Coolbrith's writing, "There is not much in the poems that can be labelled as distinctly Californian. . . . A few landscape pieces are . . . definitely localized, but the most interesting of her Californian poems are those which touch upon her own career." Professor Stevenson is one of few commentors, including Genevieve Taggard, who has lived on the coast, to show an awareness of the fact that there exists in California a problem of adjustment between the poet and his surroundings. To call it a "problem" is perhaps to misrepresent the poet's attitude toward the world about him. And if it does exist, one cannot suppose that it is any grave concern of the critic who lives at a great distance and cannot detect the symptoms of a local literature three thousand miles away. But for the most part those poets who are now writing in California were not born here, and they are consequently aliens in a land toward which it is impossible to remain indifferent. The poet's inherited knowledge of nature, a racial thing, fortified perhaps by years of residence in Ohio or Maine, has here to be reconstructed if he writes at all in touch with the visible nature in the midst of which he has come to live. The aggressive conceit and complacence of the average citizen, particularly in the south of this state, has definitely discolored the horizon in the direction of the Pacific and induced a shade of deprecating self-consciousness in the person of reputable sense. "On this spot" (a barren roadside with scorched grass and gopher-holes) "a city will soon rise." But it is the real estate man who sees visions—and believes in signs—not the poet.

The American Indian and the national monuments of "the magic wonderland of our great southwest" together with pioneer or colonial history are the subjects denoted as "western" or "American," but equally western or American is the situation involved for the poet who seeks, not to depict history or folkways, but to sensitize his own mind and feelings to the point where he can express not amazement but conviction concerning a new country, a new and vivid emotional experience. It is amusing to those who live in the west to find that an occasional critic—usually from Greenwich Village—decries the lack of virility in contemporary western poetry. This virility, one suspects, is the note of melodrama true to stories of the old mining days, but scarcely authentic in a civilization so urbanized that gentlemen ride to the office in limousines instead of dashing in on broncos.

But dismissing this, there is, as Professor Stevenson's remark suggests, a growing conception of a "definitely localized" poetry representing not California history or Californian careers, but the scene, the display of nature, and the emotional reaction of the individual in relation to that scene, as well as a realization that American poetry which is western exists not merely as a label of locality, but as a potential problem in creation. Artistically, California suffers from the reputation of paradise. Romance and color are obvious and easy to get, but reality and form are not adjuncts of Eden. And consequently, who will take in earnest a land that proclaims itself a heaven on earth? But the writer who goes slowly, who remains silent (so far as his environment is concerned) throughout the tourist stage of fancy, who patiently absorbs the novelty and unaccustomed beauty until he can recreate them with the humanizing mark of his own mind and imagination, that writer ought eventually to produce something as native as gold or oranges and of which the state might be as proud but probably will not. Only when the new and the strange have become an integral part of his experience and are reduced from the plane of inflated marvels will the poet be able to incorporate them into the texture and fabric of good writing with that patience and rightness of the artist which are the opposite qualities to the flash and superficial delight of the sightseer. One contemplates with horror the prospect of a literature stamped "Sunkist" or "Calavo." That is as far from the present discussion as is the denial that there is here and now excellent poetry flourishing admirably in a sort of parasitic relation to the soil it grows above but does not touch. But one cannot ignore the impending emergence of poets who will in time be as much the masters of the atmospheric charm and compelling color, the intimate or lyrical or vehement aspects of the infinitely diverse California scenery, as Robinson Jeffers is master of his own peninsula and the forests and canyons of his coast.

The observant writer, his eye on the renowned California landscape, detects many a violence not mentioned by the professional boasters, as well as many a beauty too elusive for their immediate use. What he sees ceases eventually to be merely the surface phenomena of a surprising country or the recurring phenomena of seasonal change. Beside the striped miles of flowers on the spring desert, between the snowy capitals of yucca reared complacent under a burning sky, a stark reality lifts its head, for this is a hard land, if a bright one, and if man cannot find water, he can die, and with less hope of resurrection than the flowers. The poet absorbs not only the unique external appearance of the country, but something of the hope and curiosity of the people who braved hardships and death and came the long and painful way to the Pacific. Perhaps he absorbs something of their avidity, too. He would like to have a share in the land, he would like to make it his, but in a different way.

The days of pioneering are over; deserts have been turned into cotton fields and orange groves and date gardens and the homes of winter millionaires. But there remains another conquest, and a subtler one, the conquest by the imagination. And that this conquest should have, in California, an atmosphere, a coloring, and a content recognizably different from other places seems inevitable. That intense local consciousness, so ridiculous in some instances, and for which California is only too well known, is capable of genuine expression through creative minds. The American poet, living there, is primarily aware, not of the inherited romance of Spanish influence, so haplessly exploited, so rarely left to its own charm; not of the exciting pleasures of living in a nation's playground; not of the advantages of climate or place or ease of life. Rather, he is aware that he is part of a great movement, an ancient movement of humanity spreading and reaching out toward what it hopes is a better and a happier life. This movement has gone as far west as it can, there is the ocean. In sight of that barrier the force of expansion is concentrated, localized, multiplied and, in the south, we have a great metropolitan area, shut in, on one side by the Pacific, on the other by mountains and the desert.

Here is a centering of human energy and desire. It is not all poppies and sunshine and glitter of cinema; the alluring advertisements doom many to bitterness and disappointment. But it may be that the quality of life has here more of future and hope and excitement, as well as more uncertainty than in some communities long settled and not continually changing. In any case, one is aware, above the exploitation and commercialization, that here human energy and purpose having reached the limits of physical advance, are bound to flow back upon themselves and in doing so must either stagnate or create. There are numerous examples of stagnation—of imitation, of derivation. Of real creative work there is greater evidence in the arts than in poetry. But the poet, perhaps more keenly than the artist, feels that his medium of expression is altering in order to include a new environment and certain sharp facets of reality that become ever more discoverable.

It is easy to point and shout and seize the obvious opportunity under the label of "Thoughts on the Past while Visiting San Luis Rey," or "Verses on First Seeing a Eucalyptus," or "The Blue Waters of Catalina," to select a good subject while walking from here to the next corner. But it is not with the help of a guide book that an indigenous literature evolves. When man's consciousness, caught in some poignant or superior moment, struggles to find itself at home in a new place, he recreates, little by little, the exterior world in the image of old truths and convictions he has brought with him. Thus he makes the new world familiar, and affirms it in the name of art.

HILDEGARDE FLANNER.
Altadena, California.

Edward Clark, the celebrated Edinburgh printer, whose name appears on millions of books, left charity legacies to the value of £80,000. In addition he bequeathed large sums to be devoted to the education of printers.

Scientific Criticism

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

Let us make our criticism scientific. I submit the following:

Report of Freudsohn Brumpf, M.D., Psychoanalyst.

Division—Pathological Dream Psychoses.
File—64.
No.—8412M.
Name of subject—Shelley, P. B.
Matter analyzed—"Indian Serenade."

Analysis:—The title itself is significant. The subject was not an Indian, and there is no evidence that he sang or recited the verses as a serenade, or intended to do so. Delusions in which the subject believes himself a member of some other race than his own (generimania) have been investigated and classified by Krumpf, and are well known to the profession. (See, *e. g.*, Krumpf's analysis of the poet Vergil, who at one time believed himself to be a Sicilian shepherd, and of the late Edwin Booth, who often pretended to be a Dane.)

The subject's own account of the seizure shows certain familiar pathological conditions. "I arise from dreams of thee in the first sweet sleep of night." Here we have a well-marked case of the eroto-insomnia first investigated by Grumpf ("Die schlafbrechende Liebesschlaflosigkeit"—see especially Chap. X). Then follow two lines of irrelevant description of nature (descriptomania), then repetition (echomania) of the first line, then three lines asserting (as we have seen, contrary to fact—pseudomania) the arrival of the subject beneath the window of the woman supposedly addressed. It is more than probable (cf. cases reported by Prumpf in Yearbook of Hallucinations, XLV, 105, ff.) that the imagined journey of the subject was motivated by suppressed homicidal mania; for a dream, as is now established, is always the expression of a criminal or immoral wish which the skilled psychoanalyst, if no one else, can detect. In view of the repeated references to death in the last two stanzas of the poem, it may be assumed as certain that the dream-experience had actually occurred, and that, excited by it, the subject, his normal inhibitions being defective, imagined himself seeking satisfaction of his murderous impulse—or, as he himself would have said, performing a serenade.

Were the subject still living, the prognosis would be highly unfavorable, for the mental state described in the poem is a characteristic cerebral paroxysm. The condition does not invariably lead to the execution of the impulse, homicidal or other, that produced it, but, as in the case of the subject Shelley, it is sure to find expression in neurotic writings. Such writings, like those of the subject Shelley, often express melancholy and a feeling of loneliness (solomania), and may be carried to some length, as in the subject Shelley's "Adonais." The mischievous effect of such prose and verse is to be deplored, but is hardly a serious evil. Neurotics and hysterics, it is true, fasten eagerly upon these productions and profess to understand them (gnosticomania); but minds which healthily reject all matters not susceptible of scientific demonstration are probably immune to Shelleyan influences.

H. L. D.

Some Child Verse

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
SIR:

When a book of poems for children appears, so far above the average as Rowena Bastin Bennett's "Around a Toadstool Table," it is a pity for your reviewer to dismiss it in two sentences with the phrases "pleasant little verses" and "jingles." (April 19, 1930). Already the book is adored by hundreds of children and their elders. Why not give others—your readers—a chance to know that here is real imagination that will help to keep that precious spark alive in their children? and that there are fetching pictures in which Lucille Webster Holling has matched perfectly the moods of the lovely poems?

Here are a few samples of the so-called "jingles":

There's a tower at Sky Harbor
And the tower wears a light
That all the singing planes may find
Their way to port at night.

They come like homing pigeons,
They come from East and West,
The light is like a mother bird
That calls them to the nest.

Sleep walks in at the door,
And the leaping fire dies,
And the little lights go out
Like tired fireflies,
And the house-dog curls on the floor
When Sleep walks in at the door.
Sleep walks in at the door
And she neither speaks nor sings,
But her breath is sweeter than song
And folded are her wings;
And the children play no more
When Sleep walks in at the door.

E. T. COOLIDGE
Highland Park, Illinois.

"Nine Poems"

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:—

While regretting the necessity which sometimes tempts an author to answer a book review, I feel justified, by your reviewer's treatment of my "Nine Poems" in your April 3 issue, in begging a little space in which publicly to disapprove of his method.

Unfortunately for my argument, I have to agree with him that the poem he misquoted (he did not get as far as the correction slip at the end) is not a very good one. But in view of the fact that most of these nine poems were written three and four years ago, and were published in various English literary papers of good repute, and, moreover, received praise from such competent judges as Eleanor Farjeon and Gordon Bottomley, your reviewer's suggestion that they are an excuse for an interest in typography seems singularly out of place.

The moral of this is that the young poet who expects an intelligent reception of his serious endeavors is going to be stopped at the first page, unless he happens to share your reviewer's reckless preference for "25-cent pamphlet poets" and buys his homage with advertising space.

Who killed Cock Robin? Well, your reviewer certainly drew his bow, but this self-appointed sparrow lacked the mortal arrow.

STEWART GUTHRIE.
New York City.

Pure Vitriol

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
SIR:

As usual, the *Saturday Review* maintains its balance and succeeds in finding just the right phrase for a new writer. Amy Loveman regards Claire Spencer as "a novelist to watch," which is a much truer judgment than the blare of the advertisements which hail her as a novelist who has arrived.

But I tend heartily to disagree with Miss Loveman when she says that "Miss Spencer is too much of an artist to be the partisan. She passes no judgment upon her Scotch community, nor does she pour out pity on Effie." I never can see that partisanship—or lack of it—has anything to do with art. And the fact, therefore, that Miss Spencer seems to me wholly partisan does not detract from the value of her writing. But partisan is hardly the word. It is pure vitriol that is poured on the head of Mistress Weir—and by that most subtle of methods: letting facts speak for themselves. As for pity where Effie is concerned: how can pity be given to one whom we admire to the point of awe?

Incidentally, isn't the whole book permeated with the atmosphere of "Wuthering Heights"? I'd like to know whether or not Claire Spencer is a great reader of the Brontës.

But of course the very fact that she arouses comment, question, criticism even, marks her as "a novelist to watch."

ELEANOR BLAKE.

Careless Publishers

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

I think it was time some publicity was given to the fact that certain publishers ruthlessly mutilate book manuscripts sent to them for examination. Most publishers are very careful about this. But there recently returned to my New York agent, after six months dilatory consideration, a manuscript in a form so mutilated and soiled—not only containing pencil marks, but marks made with ink—that I was compelled to pay $5 to have it cleaned fit for another publisher to see. Even then it should be recopied, but as this costs $75 to $100 I shall not undertake this unless some other publisher finishes the atrocity. I think such carelessness uncalled for; I consider it almost malicious. I think certain publishers should consider the expense of having a book manuscript copied and improve their ethics accordingly. I should like to know what your writer-readers think about it.

T. SWANN HARDING.

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The New Books

History

(*Continued from page* 1075)

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. By G. N. CLARK. Oxford University Press. 1930.

There is only one word which adequately describes Mr. Clark's book—mellow. He has lived long with the seventeenth century and it has become part of his make-up with the result that he is able to give here an almost complete picture of it. He deals in turn with its many sides, with industry, international law, constitutional history, political thought, colonization, education, art, literature and religion. The century, as he says, cannot be compressed into a formula. "It is not one of those stretches of time, like the age of the Renascence and Reformation, to which we commonly give some simply descriptive title. It was an age of immense energy, the age of Galileo and Grotius, of Rembrandt and Racine. Shakespeare lived through the first part of the chronological century and Peter the Great had come to his maturity when it ended." Yet, though the century was one of transition, Mr. Clark makes it intimately comprehensible. He writes with scholarly charm and the reality of his learning is enhanced by his modesty. His footnotes reveal a most winning intellectual honesty containing, as they do, such phrases as "I am not competent to discuss. . . ." and "I am not qualified to say. . . ."

THE NARRATIVE OF THE CAPTIVITY AND RESTORATION OF MRS. MARY ROWLANDSON. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. $1.25.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL HISTORY OF AN ENGLISH VILLAGE (CRAWLEY, HAMPSHIRE), 909-1928. By *Norman S. B. Gras* and *Ethel C. Gras*. Harvard University Press. $7.50.

CONDORCET, THE TORCH BEARER OF THE REVOLUTION. By *Anne Elizabeth Burlingame*. Boston: Stratford Co. $2.50.

WASHINGTON'S WESTERN LANDS. By *Roy Bird Cook*. Strasburg, Va.: Shenandoah Publishing House, Inc.

Juvenile

(*The Children's Bookshop appears on the next page*)

Religion

THE HISTORY OF FREETHOUGHT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. By J. M. ROBERTSON. Putnams. 1930.

The Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson is, of course, the acknowledged authority on the development of freethought, and his well-known "Short History" has deservedly held the field. In the present two volumes, which are to form the concluding parts of a proposed new survey of freethought, Mr. Robertson shows how comprehensive, yet detailed, his knowledge is, and he should attract the attention of the average man for whom he is avowedly writing.

What Mr. Robertson really gives here is a history of the nineteenth century as seen through the rationalist's spy-glass, and the period is well-suited to him. Freethought in its modern form has received its greatest stimulus from the growth of scientific knowledge and its corollary, the industrial revolution. The advance of scientific knowledge, on the one hand, led men to the conclusion that all phenomena have natural causes, if you can only find them, and that the interventions of supernatural powers are irreconcilable with the laws of nature. The industrial revolution, on the other hand, increased man's power over nature and surrounded him with a material civilization which bred in him a feeling of security and thus undermined the need for religious faith of the old type.

In tracing the changes of opinion, Mr. Robertson naturally writes with a sure hand. He is especially interested, of course, in Darwin's ideas of evolution, in Spencer, Huxley, and Buckle, and he pays particular attention to the progress of Biblical criticism. He points out, rather exultantly, the damages which freethought has caused in the fabric of the old religious dogmatism, with its stress upon the miraculous, and he shows how the conception of Christ as simply a great leader of men is now almost universal. But though Mr. Robertson writes as a freethinker, it may be suggested that he goes perhaps a little too far in his worship of science which has killed the old religion but not real religion. Science can only answer the question, "How?"—and if the question "Why?" is to be answered, religion must answer it. Science and religion have each their own functions and must "their own appointed limits keep."

Those who do not go the whole way with the freethinkers may find a number of points in these volumes to which they must take exception, but no one can deny the solidity of Mr. Robertson's contribution to modern knowledge.

Murder Will Out

By ROBERT INNES CENTER

ANNE AUSTIN is one of the brightest stars among detective-story writers. She has always set herself a high standard and does not fail to maintain it in "Murder Backstairs" (Macmillan). You will have to read a great many detective stories to find a plot as ingenious and skilfully worked out as this one. As the story unfolds itself, each incident is plausible and logical. There is not one unexplained event nor one loose thread hanging around at the end, and in this day of so much careless writing in detective stories this is certainly a distinct relief.

"Murder Backstairs" opens with a house party at the home of the *nouveau riche* Berkeleys. The first night, to announce an engagement, a dinner is given which starts off badly due to some unfortunate and rude remarks made by members of the family, and nearly ends in a fight. The guests retire early in a very disgruntled mood and some are so angry that they have murder in their hearts. The next morning, "Bonnie" Dundee, a young detective who is a guest, goes for an early morning dip in the swimming pool and there discovers the body of his hostess's maid. He finds that she was murdered in the summer house by a blow on the head from a heavy perfume flask and afterwards thrown into the pool with a multi-colored scarf tied around her legs. This murder leads to many baffling events, and it will be an astute reader, indeed, who can guess the solution to this engrosing crime. The clues are all there in plain sight, yet are so well hidden that you are bound to miss some of them at first. But the author plays absolutely fair with her reader, and you will have a great time trying to outwit her. Miss Austin knows how to create suspense in a masterly fashion, and I urge you not to miss this detective story which is certainly one of the best published this spring.

The short stories that make up the collection entitled "The Mysterious Mr. Quin," by Agatha Christie (Dodd, Mead) are not detective stories in the usual accepted sense. While they do contain mystery and crime, they are primarily studies in deduction. Mrs. Christie possesses the rare faculty of making something interesting out of almost nothing. Many of these stories of crime, love, and adventure are slight in regard to plot, but the deductions are so cleverly handled that the actual events do not matter very much. Two characters, Mr. Satterwaite, an amusing old bachelor, and Mr. Harley Quin appear in each of the stories—Mr. Harley Quin playing Sherlock Holmes to Mr. Satterwaite's Watson. Who Mr. Quin really is—a human being or symbolical character—remains a mystery to the end of the book. You can draw your own conclusions and you probably will be right. The book will give you many problems to solve and a chuckle over Mrs. Christie's entertaining and subtle humor.

Two other particularly good collections of short detective and spy stories are "The Heaven-Sent Witness," by J. S. Fletcher (Knopf), and "The Knife behind the Curtain," by Valentine Williams (Houghton Mifflin). Most of the stories in the Fletcher collection seem to be new with the exception of "The Button and the Banknote," which appeared in that excellent anthology, "The Best English Detective Stories of 1929," edited by Father Ronald A. Knox (Liveright). I enjoyed the Williams book quite as much as Mrs. Christie's until Mr. Williams, in "The Blonde in Blue," retells the old tale about the chewing gum and the diamond. That is decidedly unworthy of Mr. Williams's superior talent. But the rest are good and should not be missed if you enjoy short stories.

"The Man Who Was There," by N. A. Temple-Ellis (Dutton), gets off to a very slow start, but after the first hundred pages increases its pace and turns out to be a better than average detective story. The Isle of Wight makes a unique background for a murder and allows for many strange happenings on the lonely downs and cliffs. The author leads you on several cleverly-hidden wrong trails, and this will help you over the dull places.

For Wallace fans I recommend "The India-Rubber Men" (Crime Club), a fast moving tale about gunmen who wear rubber gas masks, gloves, and shoes and commit audacious crimes right under the very nose of the police. This book contains all the usual Wallace thrills and excitement and is one of the best he has written in the past few months. "The Yorkshire Moorland Murder," by J. S. Fletcher (Knopf), is decidedly above his usual standard and will appeal even to those who are not faithful followers of Fletcher.

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Superciliousness

THERE'S nothing like "the open letter" for letting us see ourselves as others see us! Recently, under cover of our fellow-department entitled "Points of View," we discovered one reader's "amusement and distress" at the "superciliousness" of our attitude towards books for children. Certainly surprised rather than hurt, for "The Children's Bookshop" long since adopted frankness for its own private slogan, our immediate reaction was the simple question, self-put, "If supercilious, why on earth are we bothering about the objects of our disdain?" Any one with eyes can see not only the practically universal need, in this day of public education, for books for children to read, but also the recent almost overwhelming response in the absolutely conscientious and highly trained efforts of countless individuals, authors, illustrators, publishers, bookshop people—why elaborate the familiar list? Whole new ranges of grand experience are being opened up for the child, in many cases old as the hills, as in the volumes of folklore. And the fact that the book of individual genius does not come along once in a million has little to do with the value of such contributions—here it is not so different in children's literature from any other field of the arts or sciences: genius is hard come at, when all's said and done. But—there *is* another side to the picture! Commercialism sees the child, or rather his parent, as an easy victim, and for the ensuing books "the assumption that almost anybody can write for children" which so irritated our correspondent on the part of one of our reviewers, is only too true. If any aspersion was cast on a worthy book, this "Bookshop" nobly apologizes, but the permission to criticize openly which *The Saturday Review* always grants as a first right to its reviewers, is apt to tempt to the opposite of a "blurb" in many cases. Forgive our reviewers, on freedom bent!

If truly we were "supercilious," we should be mightily set up by the following communication from a friend of ours. As it is, we are greatly amused—and we *won't* be held responsible for

One Person's Opinion.
(From a letter)

"There are no books for children. A good book for a child is a good book for an adult, and vice versa. Every house should have a room containing a vast miscellaneous assortment of books. To punish your child, shut him, or her, or it, up in his room until you both forget what the offense was. Practically all the modern books for children that I have seen are tripe—*almost* as bad as the stuff on which preceding generations of children have been nourished. What the Hell is the good of bothering about reading for children: the real problem is reading for parents. Solve that and the other will take care of itself. One word, my brethren, in closing. All fiction containing any reference to æroplanes or radios should be barred from the mails as an obscene nuisance.

Since I have been elected to the National Geographic Society my fees have gone up, and so my charge for this letter will be $25." . . .

CHARLES A. BENNETT.

(*This is one of the last letters written by the late Charles A. Bennett, Professor of Philosophy at Yale, and a literary mind of the first order.*)

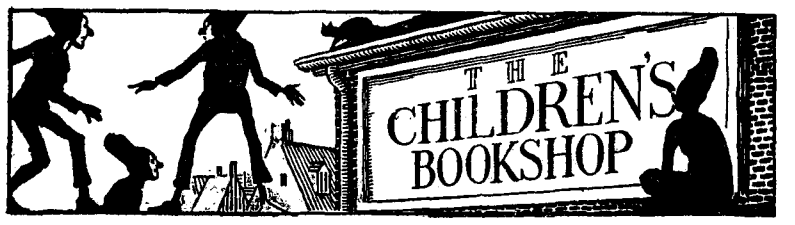
Reviews

THE WASHINGTON PICTURE BOOK. By LOIS LENSKI. New York: Coward-McCann. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by CARL ROLLINS

THE second of the series on American cities done in picture by Lois Lenski. It takes Jimmy and Joan, two small children, through Washington on a sight-seeing tour of the capital in fifteen colored cartoons. In each one the two tots appear, Jimmy with his guide-book and toy horse, Joan with handbag and doll. They view the Capitol, the Monument, the Library of Congress, and many of the other regular features of a trip to Washington, and they manage to slide down the bannisters of the Library and sit in the forbidden chairs at Mount Vernon—two performances which would shock Washington beyond belief! Also they dine in state—and private—with President Hoover.

The drawing is pleasant and just sufficiently humorous, and the episodes are enough in number to whet the appetite without cloying it. The color reproductions in flat tints are excellent, simple and positive as a child's crayon work. The book will obviously not appeal to youngsters of the size of Jimmy and Joan, but a girl of



Conducted by MARION PONSONBY

thirteen, who picked up the book before I could get a chance to write this review, was entranced by it. She has never been to Washington, but it is nevertheless a real place to her, and she knew enough of the places delineated to appreciate the pictures. It is far better than photographs would be, and a pleasant book to look at—which is what a picture book should be.

THE TOWN CRIER OF GEVREY. By ESTELLE KERR. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1930.

Reviewed by DOROTHY CANFIELD FISHER

"THE Town Crier of Gevrey" gives a faithful picture of the life in a small French country village in the summer of 1918, and yet there is nothing harrowing in it to young readers. And that is faithful to reality. For by 1918, most children not actually in contact with it had become quite used to the war and took it as matter-of-factly as they always take the backgrounds of their lives. The details of the story—the food and kerosene cards, the requisition of horses, the craving for white bread, the old women with wheelbarrow-loads of fodder for rabbits—are all carefully observed and honestly set down both in the pleasant text and agreeable illustrations by the author. There are none of the mistakes of half-information so common in this sort of a book when written by an American. Just so did life flow along in sleepy French villages far from the front.

The story itself is more conventional, but because there is nothing very original in the simple plot, it is all the more sure to please young readers. The story has value because of its faithfulness to the general reality of the scene, rather than because of the narrative, although that is of a kind sure to interest children.

A poor little orphan girl, Marie, is traveling with the perambulating movie-show which comes to Gevrey, under the harsh care of a man who exploits her. At Gevrey she falls in with the boy hero, Pierre, thirteen years old, also poor but carefully brought up by a widowed mother, acting as town-crier in his grandfather's place. Each of the children has an older brother in the army at the front. But Marie thinks hers must be lost, because she has not heard from him in so long. The boy and his mother befriend the forlorn little girl, who is deserted by her guardian. When Pierre's big brother comes home from the front, wounded, he has with him his friend and savior, who turns out to be—who do you think?—Marie's older brother! And they all plan to live happily together. There are casual American soldiers and ambulance drivers, done with unusually good taste and discretion.

EVERY WHICH WAY IN IRELAND. By ALISON BARSTOW MURPHY. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1930. $1.75.

THE DEENIE MAN. By JO MCMAHON. New York: E. P. Dutton. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by ANNE HUME VANCE

"EVERY Which Way in Ireland" is, we are told, the first book written by a girl scout, though the adventures of boy scouts in Alaska among the grizzlies, in Africa on safari, and from Buenos Aires to New York on a perilous hike of ten thousand miles, have for a year and more been good reading for boys and girls.

Alison Barstow Murphy, fifteen years old, visits with her family the country of her ancestors. Her story is interesting, because she is young and eager and faithful in the telling. Because she is young, too, or perhaps more an eager traveller than a penwoman, her style is uneven: there are prosy accounts of commonplace events interspersed with grandiose passages adapted from Irish folklore (so hard to tell except by the fit few). She is at her best when describing the Irish countryside, for she is responsive to its beauty: the varied and abundant flowers, the misty hills and wooded slopes, the forests fresh and cool and damp, the waterfalls. She makes her reader know the lush summer landscape of Killarney, and as well the rough slopes and rugged rocks of Cork.

Not a castle nor an ancient monument has escaped her, and the rewards for diligence and alertness have been many,—an almost extinct ceremony in a Druid circle, an Aran Island wedding, a game of hurling at Galway.

We who remember a golden visit of the Irish Players to America think Alison found her best reward in her meeting with Lady Gregory. To pick and eat of the fruit of gooseberries in Lady Gregory's garden, attended by herself, was happiness enough for one impressionable girl. Add to it, conversations with William Butler Yeats and "A. E.;" top it all with a visit to the Dublin Horse Show and fill it in with the many homely happenings that go to make up a summer's holiday in a new country, and you have "Every Which Way in Ireland."

What can one say about a book that solemnly points out the difference between dragons in picture books and real dragons (the first are always fierce and slimy and polished; the *real* ones are leathery and tan-colored, quite likable and fond of having their chins scratched). One is really not quite accustomed to having dragons pull at one's heartstrings, nor one's sympathies engaged by undersized little fairy people, impossibly and provokingly stupid, who can't remember anything for any time at all, who cut pieces out of the elbows of their coats to mend their trousers over the knee; who hang apples on trees that haven't any because it makes them look so jolly?

That seems to be the way deenie men are! And what can one do but be sorry when humans, even nice children, are always disappointing them by not helping to pretend that fairy things are real? They, on the other hand, are always trying to help humans out of trouble, even going back into the day before yesterday, finding out things that people should have done, and doing them in their own deenie way.

The author knows the deenie man's world, and he knows, too, how a frog feels when he is down in the water, and other things about fairyland and forests and fields.

ERNEST, THE POLICEMAN. By S. G. HULME BEAMAN. New York: Oxford University Press. 1930. $2.

Reviewed by MARY ELLEN CHASE

SINCE to most young children toys are fully as actual as people (and to some far more satisfactory!), Mr. Hulme Beaman's "Ernest, the Policeman" will not suffer on the score of unreality. Indeed, much of its charm for all readers, old and young, lies in the naturalness of its incidents, that is, in the fact that the perennially young mind of the author has conceived and executed the very games and plays and stories which children might well devise themselves. Given the wooden people, given the Theatre Royal, the wonderful train with its sail, and given especially Ernest himself, what child would not find it the most inevitable pastime to invent situations for such exciting characters and for such a village as Toytown?

The humor, too, is the humor of action, always dear to children. Less subtle than the A. A. Milne variety which it suggests, it is more appealing and satisfying to the average child for the simple reason that it is more easily grasped. The pranks which the toy characters invent are the pranks of inventive children, and hence are appreciated to the full.

One of the very best features of these six stories, which center about Ernest, the important policeman, is their dialogue. This reminds one again of the Milne dialogue in its conciseness, its rapidity, and now and then in its whimsical cadence and sudden turn of phrase, all of which characteristics make for pleasure.

Mr. Beaman has added immeasurably to his stories by his own illustrations. Here in vivid suggestion as well as vivid color are the Magician with his pots and his smells at the lonely cross-roads, the Inventor with his non-stop train, the conceited Mayor, the lovely Old Gentleman with his green umbrella. These form one of the most outstanding features of the book, which is among the first for children to be issued by the Oxford Press and deserves widespread circulation.

Eternity

By HARRIET E. DAVIS

WE learned about it in Sunday-School.
So to-day Hilda and I shut our eyes
on the street corner
And tried to imagine Eternity—
On and on and on . . .
Forever and ever and ever. And ever and
ever and—
But circles and things were whirling around
inside of my head,
Faster and bigger and redder!
So I opened my eyes, quick!
And oh, how still and clear the street
looked,
And how nice!

May Reading List

By JOSEPHINE H. THOMAS,
The New Haven Children's Bookshop.

THE LIFE STORY OF THE BIRDS. By *Eric Daglish*. New York: William Morrow & Co. $3.

The ways and habits of birds, told with beauty and accuracy by an artist-naturalist. For any age.

THE EARTH FOR SAM. By *W. Maxwell Reed*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. $3.50.

"The story of mountains, rivers, dinosaurs and men." With excellent plates. Ages 9-12.

GARRAM THE HUNTER. By *Herbert Best*. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. $2.

A thrilling story for boys about twelve of a boy of the African Hill Tribes.

HOLIDAY MEADOW. By *Edith M. Patch*. New York: The Macmillan Co. $2.

"Here are stories of star-nosed moles, woodchucks, Queen Anne's lace, caterpillars, snowbirds, timothy grass, and butterfles." Ages 8-12.

PRAN OF ALBANIA. By *Elizabeth C. Miller*. New York: Doubleday, Doran. $2.

"Of her life in the mountains and the refugee barracks of Skodra." For high school age.

LUCIAN GOES A-VOYAGING, *retold by Agnes C. Vaughan*. New York: Alfred A Knopf Inc. $2.

Retold from the Greek of two thousand years ago. Very absurd and very amusing. Ages 10-14.

THE JAW-BREAKER'S ALPHABET. By *Eunice* and *Janet Tietjens*. Illustrated by *Hermann Post*. New York: Albert & Charles Boni. 1930. $3.50.

An original picture book showing the prehistoric creatures that must have been the ancestors of the animals we know today. For any age.

THE PICTURE BOOK OF SHIPS. By *Peter Gimmage* and *Helen Craig*. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1930. $2.

Graphic with ketches, cutters, catboats and cruisers, with all their rigs.

HOW THE DERRICK WORKS. By *Wilfred Jones*. New York: Macmillan Co. 1930. $2.

This shows how the derrick builds sky-scrapers, hoisting itself from floor to floor as we watch the boom swing against the sky.

WATCHING EUROPE GROW. By *Cornelia Stratton Parker*. New York: Horace Liveright. 1930. $4.

Some young people took Europe in hand for three months and discovered what she had been at for 2000 years, not just what she looks like now.

THE ADVENTURES OF MARIO. By *Waldemar Bonsels*. New York: Albert & Charles Boni. $3.

Of a boy who tried after a boy's fashion, to make himself lord of his small creation, the moor, the dark forest, and the lake. Suitable for thoughtful children around twelve years.

A Suggestion

Why should not parents sometimes read to their sons and daughters fine passages, good chapters, from books which the children might not yet enjoy as wholes? Parts of "Moby Dick," "Gulliver's Travels," Andrew Lang's translation of "The Odyssey?" These fragments might stimulate later friendliness with the great books, or at least provide for the future reader the surprise of recognition. Anyhow, a purple or true-blue patch of writing is an excellent fillip to the imagination.

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

In quiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

R. F. J., Clarksburg, W. Va., wants a list of biographies written during recent years that I consider worth while and interesting to review and discuss at a small literary club.

I WISH all the questions reaching this desk called for so little looking-up. For what ever else I may read, I read every biography that comes in, and keep at hand a larger proportion of them than of any other kind of book: all I need is to look down the line on the latest shelf and choose those that bring back a remembered sensation of satisfaction, for one reason or another.

The chief reason, however, is one that might not satisfy the members of this group. It is hard to tell anyone which biographies he is likely to enjoy, unless you know why he reads biographies at all. I read them not to learn what people have done but to guess at what they have been, and value them largely for the dexterity with which the author reveals this, more especially if they have been different from other people, by reason of complexity or of a simplicity even more baffling. This is one reason why I like David Cecil's "The Stricken Deer" (Bobbs-Merrill) better than other 1930 biographies. It is the life of Cowper: we are all, of course, supposed to know the incidents of that life and the nature of its tragedy—perhaps the blackest that can overwhelm the spirit of man—but most of us do nothing of the kind, having only a general notion that in time he went crazy, having inspired some of the chastest and most unconventional devotions on record. Hugh l'Anson Fausset's "William Cowper" (Harcourt) tells it for students, but here, for the general reader is that life that marvellously managed by sheer honesty to slap down Mrs. Grundy; that sank so many times before it went down for the last time, and kept so cheerful while it kept afloat. Another reason why I enjoy it is that the author, so far as any evidence offered by the book, might never have heard of Lytton Strachey, which speaks well for his strength of mind. Not that I do not find Strachey the prince of biographers, but I am a trifle tired of his influence when it is exerted on writers without his erudition or his urbanity.

For the same reason, an interest in what Spielhagen called *problematische Naturen*, I continue to read Byron biographies even now that the so-called Byron mystery is no more—I even have a long *étude* on Maurois's "Byron" (Appleton) in the current number of *Creative Reading* and find Ethel Colburn Mayne's "Life of Lady Byron" (Scribner) inexhaustible because at least three of the women in it are more enigmatic than the comparatively transparent and tawdry Byron. There is, by the way, another novel, "Regency Windows," by David Emerson (Little, Brown) in which Caroline Lamb figures; I had vowed never to touch another, but not having read the notice on the jacket I was led happily through a bustling Regency society until it burst upon me that the hero must be William Lamb and his mother-in-law, that Lady Bessborough who lurks in the background of this extraordinary family. It is as good a novel as I have read of a time concerning which many a scandalous novel could be—and has been—written.

Again, "Alias Bluebeard," by Emile Gabory (Brewer), kept me at it till the last word, because I long wanted a real life of Gilles de Raiz—the worst man, I think, that ever lived—not so much for his sins, which are fairly well on the record, but because I wanted to know more about his amazing repentance, which seems to have nearly made him a saint in spite of himself. This book is more scholarly than one might think from the title and the inside subject. I was similarly hospitable to "King Spider" (Coward) because I wanted to know what D. B. Wyndham-Lewis would do with Louis XI, and if it were to give him a coat of whitewash he certainly could do with a little. There is another repenting sinner, not so eminent or so spectacular, on display in the reprint of the personal confession of Henry Tufts, a famous early American rogue, long out of print and just brought back with a preface by E. L. Pearson as "The Autobiography of a Criminal" (Duffield). There are a number of contemporary American woodcuts, one somewhat misleading one showing him on the gallows, for this beauty dodged the rope and made—when quite ready—an edifying end. What makes a man a great criminal lawyer? the reasons why Marshall Hall was one, set forth in Edward Marjoribanks's "For the Defence" (Macmillan), make this one of the books of the year—let alone all the famous trials you get extra.

With such interest in how the wheels go round, naturally I find E. F. Dakin's "Mrs. Eddy: the Biography of a Virginal Mind" (Scribner) vastly entertaining and I am happy to find it on the list of forty books chosen from the publications of 1929 for the League of Nations by the American Library Association. It is in a new and enlarged edition, which brings it into the class of recent publications. It is for this touch of the irreconcilable in the elements of human nature that I read all the Stevenson lives, including the new one, "The Frail Warrior," by Jean Marie Carré (Coward), not for new material—the book seems to have been written, like "Ariel," more for French readers than with an eye toward translation—than for its spirit, which takes its materials for granted and uses them without either sentimentality or spite. For sheer swashbuckling romance there is Raymond Escholier's "Victor Hugo" (Brewer), and for poignancy the brief heartbreaking career of the Marvellous Boy, dead by his own hand on the edge of immortality at eighteen, given in "Thomas Chatterton," by Esther Parker Ellinger (University of Pennsylvania). Sometimes I think this press must be run for my personal benefit, its books so often drop into a niche in my somewhat inconsistent interests. "Thomas Killigrew," by Alfred Harbage, I needed because I like a dramatist who can roll up his period into a play, and this one ran the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane at the time of Sir William Davenant and wrote "The Parson's Wedding." I don't know how many others will find this fascinating, but any student of American history would welcome their fine new volume, "A Quaker Forty-Niner," Charles Pancoast's own story of his adventures in the gold fields of California, now brought back in great shape, or "The Red Hills," by Cornelius Weygandt, a guide-book and general explanation of the country around Lancaster, Pa., a book I once figured I could conscientiously recommend as indispensable to at least twelve different types of collectors (one being of china and another of books on magic).

The present, second volume of the Hardy biography, "The Later Years of Thomas Hardy," by Florence Emily Hardy (Macmillan), largely from his own journals brings this quiet record to a close; it opens with the excitements over "Tess" and "Jude." As the title implies, T. R. Ybarra's "Bolivar, the Passionate Warrior," (Washburn) is a military biography, in which the personal life of the liberator is submerged in his career—but what a personal sort of career, feverish, glorious, and terrible! "Livingstone," by R. J. Campbell (Dodd), is an uncommonly good book for a missionary circle, and I find that Honoré Willsie Morrow's "Tiger, Tiger!" (Morrow), a novelistic life of John B. Gough, has had a genuine welcome in many reading clubs. Literary clubs can use A. E. Zucker's "Ibsen the Master Builder" (Holt); it is a quiet book and fits in all the plays.

Clemenceau books have been a feature of the season; they came in a cluster, and if I could have but one for general readability and sparkle I would take "Clemenceau," by Jean Martet (Longmans), for this has a sort of *en pantouffles* effect without being slipshod. "The Tiger," by George Adam (Harcourt), has the distinct advantage of being by an outsider—for though the author had been for years the Paris correspondent of the London *Times*, he was by birth a Briton—and by one who had done his best to keep, in his book, out of the animosities of which he says "He lived too vividly, too aggressively, not to have left behind him numbers of embittered foes." To plunge into the bitterest of these rows, take the book that started the most determined posthumous warfare of modern times, Recouly's "Foch: My Conversations with the Marshal" (Appleton), then read Clemenceau's own reply, "Grandeur and Misery of Victory" (Harcourt), the book on whose manuscript he made final corrections on the last day of his life, dying with "*mon oeuvre est fini.*" This book is dynamite with pepper on it. But, to take one minor matter, as what he says about America in it is what every middle-aged Frenchman I have met seems to think about America—and I have met several

(*Continued on next page*)

» SCRIBNER LEADERS «

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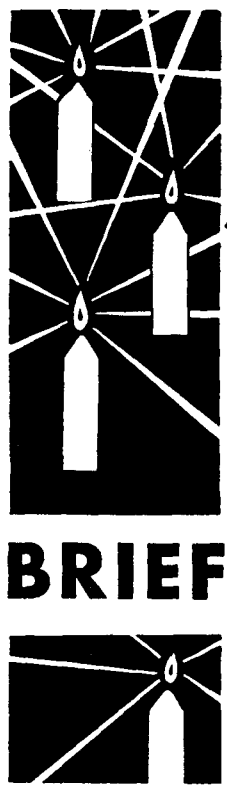

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The Reader's Guide

(*Continued from preceding page*)

since the War—it will be useful for us to know it, if we can stand finding it out.

The American biographies lead off with "American," by Frank B. Linderman (Day), a magnificent story of Chief Plenty Coups, the best Indian biography we have had. "Johnson of the Mohawks," by Arthur Pound (Macmillan), is the life of the Irishman who kept the Iroquois on the side of the English, the only Anglo-Saxon of his day who seems to have thought of an Indian as other than something to be stepped on. It is as much history as biography, perhaps even more. So is "Rutherford B. Hayes; Statesman of Reunion," by H. J. Eckenrode (Dodd), first of a series of lives of American political leaders edited by Allen Nevins; this one jumps into the thick of a famous scandal. "Sherman," by Liddell Hart (Dodd), is the new biography we need if we are to keep our interest in the Civil War properly documented.

This is already too long a list for its purpose, but I can assure that inquirer that he may freely and safely choose from it, so far as general interest and readability goes. Looking over the list, I have an uncomfortable feeling that there is a large percentage of roguery in it—but this year rogues have come off well at the hands of biographers. Or perhaps I have found them more amazing or amusing. So here are two more without roguery; "Vanamee," by Mary Conger Vanamee (Macmillan), is the only biography I have found at all like "An American Idyl," and I hope it will be widely read—it will be loved by all who read it. "Daguerrotypes," by Ada Wallas (Macmillan), is a group of studies of the family friends of a little Victorian girl in England; it has the charm of an earlier time, the charm of "Emma" or of "Cranford."

J. O. B., Chapel Hill, N. C., is making a study of the origin and growth of the pseudo-scientific novel, and asks for titles of nineteenth-century works of this *genre.* He is "neglecting the mushroom growth of such novels after Wells, and attempting to discover the elements of the pseudo-scientific novel of the nineteenth century," being interested in such subjects as "What was the first use of the Frankenstein theme after Mary Shelley's work? To what extent did romance forcast discovery? Was Darwin anticipated in any novel?" He says he is acquainted with the novels of Mary Shelley, Poe, Verne, Collins, Flammarion, Samuel Butler, and H. G. Wells, and does not care for travel books, books of the purely supernatural, or those without some sort of scientific apparatus as part of the plot machinery. This brings the search into a comparatively narrow field with which some readers of this column may be especially at home. Is there an adequate bibliography for this type of romance? No doubt libraries have such book-lists on hand. I have never made one of any length.

C. E. W., Pittsburgh, Pa., asks which is the best English edition of the letters of Mme. de Sévigné, and of Rousseau's "Confessions."

THE "Letters of Mme. de Sévigné," with an introduction by A. Edward Newton, have been quite lately published by J. P. Horn, Philadelphia, in seven volumes; three hundred of these have never before been printed; they go from March 15, 1647 to May 27, 1696. There are 1550 numbered sets costing $52. Brentano publishes her "Letters to Her Daughter and Her Friends," edited by Richard Aldington, in two volumes, illustrated, at $8.50. Selections are to be found in Warner's, and there are sketches of her life in Gamaliel Bradford's "Portraits of Women" (Houghton Mifflin) and E. B. Hall's "Women of the French Salons" (Putnam). The "Confessions," translated by W. C. Mallory in two volumes, in large type with thirteen engravings, costs $8.50 (Brentano); in two volumes, translated with a preface by Edmund Wilson, it costs $7.50 (Knopf); Lippincott publishes an edition also in two volumes, at $4. I can find no trace of the inexpensive edition in which I read this work a good while ago; it must be out of print. There is a biography of him in "Three Reformers: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau," by Jacques Maritain (Scribner), a brilliant work that somehow acted upon me in exactly the opposite manner from that in which it must have been intended, for in the course of demolishing the ideas of the three it stated them so reasonably and so clearly that I not only remembered I was a Cartesian but suspected I might be more of a Lutheran and a Rousseauvian than I had hitherto believed. That word looks pretty bad, but I do not know a better.

L. N. E., Brooklyn Public Libray, seeing the inquiry of *S. G., Detroit,* for stories of ancient belief in flying, tells me that twenty-odd years ago he went to the trouble of compiling just that sort of book, called by him "Annals of Pristine Aviation" and still, he believes, the only comprehensive survey of the subject intended for grown-ups. It is still unpublished, as some ten years ago he came to the conclusion that publishers didn't want it. In almost the same mail, however, comes a copy of just the book for which S. G. seems to be looking: "Wonder Flights of Long Ago," edited by Mary Elizabeth Barry and Paul R. Hanna (Appleton), and with unusually beautiful black-and-white drawings by Lynd Ward. Here are the flying horses, alive or mechanical, the flying carpet and trunk, the fire-bird and dragons of romance and myth, along with the aerial trips of Dædalus, Icarus, and Phæton. It has star-maps and a much-needed glossary, and a map with the air-routes, across the earth and over the solar system, of some of the characters in the book.

R. H., New York City, soon to go to Germany for the first time, asks for travel books.

UNTIL this year I have been in the habit of telling such inquirers that they would have to take what they could get and it would not be much. This season, however, look what they are getting! Publishers seem all at once and all together to have realized that such books are needed and wanted; we have a new Clara Laughlin, "So You're Going to Germany and Austria" (Houghton), which many travelers will use instead of a Baedeker, though of course the Baedeker reaches its highest point in the German volumes. There is a fine new travelogue book by E. M. Newman, "Seeing Germany" (Funk), beautifully illustrated. Macmillan issues here a new color book in the series of A. and C. Black, "Germany," by Gerald Bullett, with a great many lovely watercolor pictures of picturesque places everywhere; there is something like a story in the text, a Wodehousian young man in the party providing comic relief. The conversation in the book reminds me of that of the parties of traveling English I used to meet in Germany before the war, especially in its attitude to local legends. It is the cheapest of the really fine color books, costing $2.50. "Old World Germany of To-Day," by Gerald Maxwell (Dodd), is full of photographs and would help anyone plan a picturesque tour. "Meet the Germans," by Henry Albert Phillips (Lippincott), is an interpretation by one who was evidently pleased to meet them. "Vienna, Yesterday and To-day," by J. Alexander Mahan (Brentano), is by a young American doctor studying there, who describes and explains well. There is a new edition of "Towns and People of Modern Germany" (McBride), the first travel book for this part of the world, so far as I know, to appear after the war. One traveling in Germany must on no account leave out of his equipment "The Air Tourist's Guide To Europe," by Norman Macmillan (Washburn), a complete handbook of routes, timetables, and all information needed for a tour that involves this immense timesaver. The pictures are from the air.

I have just been reading with close attention two guides that well reward it: "Blue Rhine, Black Forest," by Louis Untermeyer (Harcourt), and "The Black Forest, Its People, History, and Traditions," by Christopher Morley (Dodd). Mr. Untermeyer's book is to be taken on a walk or a motor trip, or on a more conventional transport, or just to be read at home with envy; it takes towns one by one and tells how to get from one to another and what you see on the way. Mr. Marlowe's book is strong on legends; taking them together one realizes what a gloomy lot they are, how many suicides and murders and general violent deaths are commemorated in these mellow shades. But you will need to know them if you are going to this part of the world. "The Recovery of Germany," by J. W. Angell (Yale), is not a guide-book, but I put it on this list as of high value to a prospective traveler; it was published for the Committee on Foreign Relations. Of the novels we are beginning to get in translation, I believe the American traveler is likely to get the most useful impressions of everyday people from those of Clara Viebig. Her "The Woman with a Thousand Children," just published by Appleton, gives an unsentimental but heartfelt and touching picture of the life of a devoted school-teacher, one whose "life is in her work." I shall never forget the impression that her novel of servant-life, "Das Tägliche Brod," made on me years ago, or the conviction left with me by her novel about Poland, before the war, that no outside influence would make any great impression there.

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BORN IN A BEER GARDEN, OR, SHE TROUPES TO CONQUER. By MORLEY, THROCKMORTON, NASH, CALKINS, WILSON, ILLIAN, HUTAF, and JAY. New York: The Foundry Press. 1930.

THE Hoboken Renaissance will be a fine subject for exploration fifty years hence—say at the next resuscitation of "The Black Crook." And the flow of beer in that extra-territoriality on the Jersey side of the Hudson will be as free as ever. If Messrs. Morley-Throckmorton-etc.-etc.-'s enterprise had no other outcome than to rediscover the Free State of Hoboken, it has not lived in vain. What its accomplishments at the Old Rialto were I do not know from personal experience, but I think no one who went to the latest *première* of the Black Crook will soon forget a first night which lasted from six p. m. to three a. m., Manhattan time: in the Free State it was a brief and glorious time.

Those who followed the fortunes of that astounding theatrical sensation of 1929 were amazed one morning to read that the irrepressibles of Hoboken had bought an iron foundry. Probably they had been so absorbed with casts that a place where they could make their own in the image of their imagination seemed only the next logical step. But later it appeared that this iron foundry was to be used as an extension of the Three Hours for Lunch Club, and—a printing office. The Press, whether *de facto* or *de jure,* was placed under the direction of Mr. R. C. Rimington, and the first publication of the Foundry Press is the above book.

"Born in a Beer Garden" isn't to be reviewed—it is, like the theater, to be enjoyed. It contains a gorgeous lot of intimate writing about the Hoboken experiment by those best qualified to write of it—the men responsible for the fun. And then it contains the series of advertisements in the New York *"World"* which made such entertaining reading during the year 1929. These alone, wretched as they are typographically, make the book worth the admission ticket. And the illustrations, by various hands, only serve to help the atmosphere.

The book is printed by the Marchbanks Press in an edition of 999 copies. The binding is in blue checked cloth, with a languishing maiden of the period of the Black Crook holding a foaming stein of beer aloft. As a record and a souvenir the book is all that one could ask for.

THE PALETTE KNIFE. By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY. Illustrated by RENÉ GOCKINGA. New York: The Chocorua Press. 1929.

I HAVE never seen an American book which so nearly approached the French illustrated book as its best as does this edition of Mr. Morley's essay. American book illustration as a whole is weak and insipid, when it isn't frankly bad as art. Here is a book which has been done with verve and enthusiasm. The hand-colored pictures are a novelty here, and probably an expensive one, but they give an incomparable style to the volume.

If we are ever to get away from the conventional in printing (and I have no answer to the question, is it desirable to get away?) it seems to me that it should be along the lines suggested by "The Palette Knife." Here is a gorgeous use of color, a quite different title page, an impressionistic binding, a perfectly good type well set (nothing much French about *that*), within the limits of the necessarily conventional book page and book shape. One might well compare this book with the absurd attempts at "modernism" by those who think that a wash drawing reproduced in half-tone or a crazy malarrangement of bizarre type (out of the hell-box of fifty years ago) makes a "modern touch."

I think that this is a stunning book of a distinctly modern kind, and that all who have had a hand in it are to be congratulated. It is a slight book, but all to the good. R.

Form, Reform and Deform

A PRINTER friend showed me his new "modernistic" lettter heading the other day, and gleefully observed that he was quite safe in using it because no one could say whether it *is* good or bad—simply because there aren't any canons which apply to modern design! Probably that is what makes it modern—since canons of taste seem to be quite unknown and unnecessary to those who really try to be "modern."

I certainly don't know whether the two or three items at hand are good or bad: there isn't any rule to measure them with in my possession. One can only gasp and splutter, and, as Jezebel Jukes said when her son announced he was going to *marry* the *schoolma'am,* "O my God!"

FORM AND REFORM. A Practical Handbook of Modern Interiors. By PAUL FRANKL. New York: Harper & Bros. 1930.

I UNDERSTAND that the advertising agents think that I should be kept on the reservation, and that I should not undertake to speak in this column of their sacred rites: that is, I should confine myself to my "legitimate" field of typography. So the devotees of "modernism" will think that I should refrain from writing of their "art." Well, I venture this far: if modernism is worth anything at all, it must permeate all the arts and crafts, and someone must clothe, feed, and house us *modernistique* if it can be done and we are to measure up to the ridiculousness of their furniture and decorations.

I have waited for some expression of the prevailing lunacy in print: one or two of the publishers have tentatively tried it on their catalogues, but here are the first two books to exemplify it in type. It is difficult to convey in words the eccentricity of Mr. Frankl's book: the traditional balance of pages is disregarded, and heavy black rules run everywhere except where one would expect them to go. Within the limits set by the designer—and he has followed a rigid plan—there is uniformity: a black rectangle of color on each page, a full page black half-tone on each recto, and a page of Bodoni type on the verso. It is anything but a lovely book, in fact it isn't a comfortable thing to have round, but it does strike one forcibly, and is quite as comfortable and comely as the furniture and decorations which it depicts.

The printing has been extremely well done, and the book was a very difficult one to do. If you want to keep up with the procession you will want it, as well as—

WORDS. Examples of "Bifur" type. Paris: Deberny & Peignot. 1930.

THIS isn't a book or a collector's item or anything else except a weird booklet showing an atrocious new French type face. The only reason for including it in a literary review is because it shows a face of type which represents all that is bad in type design, used in a way which makes the room where it is kept, unhappy. But perhaps it does represent the last ultimate spasm of modernism, and as such should have an historic interest—as amusing in its way as Didot's *microscopique*—and as futile.

PRINTING IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. A Survey. Reprinted from the special number of *The Times,* October 29, 1929. London: Times Publishing Co. 1930.

WHEN, last autumn, I received from London the special printing number of *The Times,* I planned to speak of it here, but really there was not room in the house to spread out that blanket sheet where I could inspect it. I caught glimpses within the vast expanse of those pages of interesting things—a picture of the "case room" of the Ashendene Press, articles by Sir Emery Walker and our own William Edwin Rudge, and intimations that here was a great résumé of printing now and here. But I never expected to read it or really see it.

Now (perhaps because the premises at Printing House Square were also too

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cramped to allow even the editors to get at the facts in the paper) the *Times* has taken pity on us—and itself—and has issued the material in the form of a quarto volume of considerable bulk. In addition there are several color plates. The whole is bound in red cloth, with gold stamped titles.

It is one of the best features of this volume that it records the present state of the industry with all the fairness which one expects from a first class newspaper. It is really reporting which is here set forth, but reporting by many and first class hands, well controlled by a competent managing editor. All aspects of the art—trade—business of printing are touched on, the ten main divisions embracing The History of Printing, Typography, Book Making, Illustration, Color Printing, Newspaper and Periodical Press, General Printing, Printing Machinery, Paper and Ink, and Printing Abroad, together with an appendix on Apprentice Training, and the St. Bride Institute Library. It is a tremendous field which has been covered, and necessarily the record has been made brief and non-technical. The pictures (done by some intaglio process one may guess, although the multiplicity of reproductive processes makes one careful about being too precise) are not only well printed but are mostly of very great interest—such pictures as these of the press room of the Golden Cockerel Press, for instance, are not common.

Mr. Rudge's short account of printing in America is a trifle ingenuous in its reference almost exclusively to books produced in one establishment here: but the illustrations of four notable American books show Mr. Updike's "Dissertation" of Rowe Mores, Mr. Dwiggings's "Moby Dick," Messrs. Adler & Kent's "Candide," and Mr. Rogers's "Champfleury." R.

Auction Sales Calendar

Hodgson & Company (115, Chancery Lane) London. May 22nd and 23rd: The property of Sir Gerald Chadwyck-Healey, Edwin Wilkins Field, and others. From an unusually dull collection of books, catalogued without the arrangement even of chronology, it is possible to point out a few that may have a certain interest: Charles Kingsley's "The Heroes," Cambridge, 1856; Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses," an unusually clean copy in the original blue cloth; William DeMorgan's "Joseph Vance," 1906; a presentation copy inscribed by the author of William Morris's "The Story of Sigurd," 1877; ten of the Burlington Fine Arts Club illustrated catalogues, 1885-1905; the Halliwell-Phillips edition of Shakespeare, 16 volumes, 1853-1865; several books on birds and trees; the first two cantos of Byron's "Don Juan," original boards, wholly uncut; ten of Sir Walter Scott's novels, 1816-1832; ten of Leigh Hunt's books; Bulwer-Lytton's "Ismael; an Oriental Tale," 1820; Darwin's "The Descent of Man," with the advertisements dated January, 1871, in both volumes; a set of Anthony Trollope in 107 volumes, of which ten, according to the catalogue, are Mores, Mr. Dwiggins's "Moby Dick," Messrs. Adler and Kent's "Candide," and Mr. Rogers's "Champfleury." An excellent group.

Once more may I express my admiration for the inclusiveness of this survey, and my appreciation for the book as a whole? Once more, too, may I ask British printers to *please* print the paper the right way of the grain, so that their books will open more easily? And finally my bias in favor of the *Times* as the best newspaper is confirmed. R.

not first editions; George Eliot's novels; Walter Savage Landor's "Tyrannicide," Bath (1851), and his "Pericles and Aspasia," 1836; a presentation copy of the first collected edition of Robert Southey's "Minor Poems," 1815; William Blake's copy of Wordsworth's "Poems, including Lyrical Ballads," 1815, with notes in Blake's handwriting; Coleridge's copy of Kant's "Vermischte Schriften," with manuscript notes by Coleridge; Leigh Hunt's copy of Ugo Foscolo's "Discorso sul Testo del Poema di Dante"; a collection of books on the mathematical sciences, chiefly of the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries; and such fascinating items as: "Hudson, W. H., A Little Boy Lost, 1905; Phillips, S., Poems, 1898, etc., 3 vols., and others (18 items)."

G. M. T.

During the coming summer, Mr. Maurice Louis Firuski, the founder of the Dunster House Bookshop in Cambridge, and its owner until the time of its incorporation in January, 1929, will open the Housatonic Bookshop at Salisbury, Litchfield County, Connecticut. There are, as the announcement says, surprisingly few country bookshops in the United States, especially in contrast with the number that seem to exist happily in England; and this present experiment, undertaken by so experienced and intelligent a man as Mr. Firuski, will be most interesting to watch. A few excellent shops, such as the ones at Farmington, Connecticut, and Northampton, have already been established successfully, and with this most recent addition it is not perhaps too much to hope that others with equally high standards will eventually come into existence—for all that anyone knows, the rural districts may be filled with rare books.

G. M. T.

Even though modern bookbindings may not be collected to any great extent except as examples of weird designs and atrocious color schemes, there are occasionally some that demand respectful attention. The Oxford University Press, which has never lent itself to anything either common or undistinguished, has recently adopted as the "party dress" of titles published also in sober cloth, bindings designed by Mr. Douglas Cockerell: these are buckram or leather backed—the latter with gold tooling, sometimes blind and gold tooling—with marble paper sides. In the hands of a genuine artist like Mr. Cockerell, this use of marble paper, instead of causing shivers and eyestrain, produces an effect of lightness and gaiety that is all the more delightful because of its unlikeness to anything else. And since it is one of the distinctive marks of such paper, marbled by hand, that no two sheets are alike, the results are infinitely varied. In his recent book, "Some Notes on Bookbinding," which is, even for a person wholly ignorant of the subject, an unusually interesting discussion, Mr. Cockerell remarks, "Although marbling paper is a process that has been used for some hundreds of years, the possibilities of the method have not yet been exhausted. To 'marble' paper, prepared colors are sprinkled on to a bath of size, the floating colors are combed, or stirred in various ways, and the resulting pattern is picked up on a sheet of paper which has been previously washed with a solution of alum. This is a messy business, but is great fun to do." Obviously, it is fun for him, and the results bring out clearly the immense amount of personal enjoyment he takes in his work. G. M. T.

Amherst College has just acquired the original manuscript of John M. Synge's "The Playboy of the Western World."

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THE PHOENIX NEST

NEW YORK seems to be positively shot full of Humanism! A prominent literary and dramatic critic has said to us that he just can't join any mixed gathering without someone buttonholing him and thus accosting him: "Are you one of those humanists?" We-ell, we can't say we know much about humanism, but we know what we like. . . .

We weren't present at the famous open forum when *Professor Babbitt* read his essay and thundered in the index, our esteemed editor comported himself with his usual *suaviter in modo*, and *Carl Van Doren* applied the humanistic method to the writings of certain famous novelists. What were we doing? Heck, *we* were *working*. That's what *we* were doing,—galley slave that we are. We were sorting out galleys, we were pasting up dummies. So we missed finding out a whole lot. . . .

However, we've got hold of a book. It is called "The Critique of Humanism" and is edited by *C. Hartley Grattan*, and it seems to us to give you the low-down on this cynosure subject. We are applying ourselves to it. A number of people whose opinions we respect, such as *"Bunny" Wilson* and *Lewis Mumford*, for example, contribute thereto. We've *got* to solve this infernal mystery. The ashes of the cigarette in the fireplace may have nothing to do with it, and then again they may. The woman in the black mask who was seen taking off in the glider out at Wading River may be implicated. We just don't know. But something is fishy in Finland. Everybody is galloping all over the place muttering about inner checks. Somebody suggested to us that there might also be some inner Slovenes mixed up in the affair, but honestly we didn't think that was very funny. . . .

What humanism actually is may turn out to be the dear old grandmother who so far has spent her waking hours in intense application to rocking and knitting—with the blood-stained mowing-machine all the time concealed in her work-bag. We don't know. It may be that curate who suddenly went so cross-eyed looking down his nose at a muffin. On the other hand it may be a couple of zebras. Anyway, armed with our volume, we are on its trail, and the devil take the hindmost. . . .

Meanwhile, for antipasto, as it were, we turn to "It's Still Boloney" by *Joseph Fulling Fishman* (Doubleday, Doran). This book has nothing to do with humanism, at least as we don't understand it. It has, however, something to do with human nature. The title is taken from the famous quotation "No matter how thin you slice it, it's still Boloney."—*Anon.* . . .

It is a take off on high-pressure salesmanship and the ways of contact men and solicitors. It is quite funny. One remark we liked was:

> So I say: Never watch the clock. A stenographer is easier to look at and is just as reliable around quitting time. . . .

Another rather amusing small book is "Ex-Baby," by *One Who Has Been Through it All* (Covici-Friede). This is also a dollar book. Both these come under the head of lighter if not utterly frivolous reading. It seems to us that since the sale of *Chic Sale* these very small vols. that almost fit the vest-pocket and are presumably to be passed around at parties as was "Mother Goose Censored" have become infinitely appealing to publishers. A caviare sandwich, a vest pocket volume, someone on the radio, inclusive of a tinkling shaker, seems to constitute the modern Khayyamaraderie. . . .

We shouldn't give Covici-Friede another break the same day but we went cuckoo over "Uncle Vanya" when we saw it on the stage of late and this firm have now got out the play in book form, translated and adapted, with a critical appreciation by *Rose Caylor*, who is, in private life, *Mrs. Ben Hecht*. . . .

Captain E. Armitage McCann has been referred to us, in the words of one of his admirers, as an "admirable seafaring halcyon egg." He is editor of *The Shipmodeler*, is the author of "How to Make Decorative Ship Models," etc., and gives talks on "The Conquest of the Sea," "The Romance of Ship Models," and so on. His personal representative is *Gertrude Hopkins* of 55 Hiddagh Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Years ago we enjoyed enormously "The Beloved Vagabond," so we are sad to learn of the death of *William J. Locke*, but a more proper notice of it will be found elsewhere in this issue. At the same age died *Edward Stratemeyer*, who wrote books for boys that sold into the millions, the most famous being the Rover Boys series. A great many people today must remember Dick, Sam, and Tom. Stratemeyer wrote his first long story of eighteen thousand words on wrapping paper and sold it to *Golden Days* in Philadelphia. But our own earliest admiration was actually *Edward S. Ellis*, which came just before "Old and Young King Brady" and the all-too-sterling *Frank Merriwell*. Then we took up *Ralph Henry Barbour*. . . .

Yet,—wait a bit, don't let us forget to pay tribute to the late *Kirk Munro*. We shall never forget Rick Dale. And the first thing we ever knew of *Rupert Hughes* was his "Lakerim Athletic Club," that ran in *St. Nicholas*. Munro ran in *Harper's Young People*, afterward *Harper's Round Table*. And *St. Nicholas* had another swell serial, "The White Cave," a story of Australia, whose author we have unfortunately forgotten. And *Eggleston's* "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," of an earlier vintage, still remains with us, along with "Tom Sawyer". . . .

Horace Howard Furness, Jr., who succeeded his father as editor of the Furness Variorum Shakespeare published by Lippincott, whose recent death is widely mourned, had a more than purely literary interest in the drama. He was at one time President of the Philadelphia Plays and Players, a director of the Edwin Forrest Home, and was instrumental in founding the Philadelphia Theatre Association, which has just opened its first season in Philadelphia with Lysistrata. He was President of the Association at the time of his death. . . .

We went recently to a lunch for René Fülöp-Miller, given by the Viking Press. He is now over here to lecture and has among other things recently edited Vassilyev's "The Ochrana: The Russian Secret Police" for Lippincott. The Viking Press recently brought out his "The Power and Secret of the Jesuits" which created such a stir abroad. During his stay he will make a close study of the American stage. His book on the Russian Theatre is to be followed by a volume on the American theatre. He was for many years one of the best-known correspondents for various German and Hungarian newspapers. . . .

Down at our end of the table sat *Heywood Broun*, and someone called attention to a likeness between Herr Fülöp-Miller and the pride of the *New York Telegram*. It was discernible. *Ben Huebsch* made some graceful remarks concerning the honored guest at the end of the lunch. . . .

Mentioning as we were *Lysistrata* (three guesses how you pronounce it!) we see that *Gilbert Seldes's* adaptation of it with *Fay Bainter* in the title rôle, directed by *Norman Bel-Geddes* and presented by the Philadelphia Theatre Association, has had several lines eliminated by the censors, and that other changes are under consideration. The censor-baiting title of Mr. Seldes's next book is "The Future of Drinking," to be published by Little, Brown and Company on the eleventh of July. Why not make it the fourth, as that is Independence Day? . . .

Now that *Masefield's* a laureate it is particularly interesting to know that a new book by him, partly in prose, partly in verse, is announced for publication in the fall by Macmillan. It is "The Wanderer of Liverpool," the story of a great sailing-ship. We wonder whether any of his original poem about this ship,—wasn't it called, "The Wanderer,"?—is to be any part of the book. That was a fine poem, as so many of his have been. . . .

Joseph Auslander, the poet, sailed May eleventh for Norway and then to Italy where he will work in a tower on the Adriatic Sea. Lucky Joe! He plans to return to New York in August bringing with him the MS. of his first novel. *Fannie Hurst* sailed a short while ago for Florence where she is to finish the novel which will follow "Five and Ten." She is to take several courses at Oxford later in the summer. . . .

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